

Chapter I

The Hoaxer or The Hoaxed?

When Jesse Woodson James "emerged" May 19, 1948, in Lawton, Oklahoma, there were doubters who thought he was staging a cruel hoax. His grandson, Jesse James III, says, "Perhaps Grandpa had it coming because he staged one of the biggest hoaxes in history on April 3, 1882, when he conveniently arranged his own 'murder' and 'funeral' in St. Joseph, Missouri."

But let's set the mood and background for the St. Jo hoax. Quick with his guns, keen of mind and daring, Jesse believed in thorough planning and the St. Jo episode was one of his better exploits. Although he had been outlawed near the end of the Civil War, Jesse was a master at changing disguises, identities and businesses. He was a restless man and kept moving.

The thought of a dramatic fake "murder" hatched in his mind one dark night in 1879 in Georgetown, Colorado, where Jesse and his inner circle had a contract shaping railroad beds and grades. He had the need of a good lawyer so he sent to Missouri for a long-time friend, Thomas T. Crittenden.

As you will see, Jesse was an opportunist. This night, Crittenden, Missouri-born Jesse Robert (Dingus) James, brother Dr. Frank James and his brother-in-law Coleman Younger, a civil engineer, were seated in a tent saloon having a few snorts when the midwest newspapers arrived. The big headlines screamed, 'JESSE JAMES GANG STRIKES AGAIN.'

Attorney Crittenden hastily glanced at stories describing two robberies far apart. One reported a train robbery in Kansas; the other a bank heist in Alabama. He slammed the newspaper down on the bar, turned and met Jesse's piercing, blue-steel eyes and snorted, "My God, Jesse, you couldn't have pulled either job - I was right here with you all the time!"

Jesse shifted the black cigar in his mouth and replied quietly, "Tom, by now you should have realized that we're blamed for every consamed robbery that takes place in the middle part of the country."

Crittenden seized the fair-skinned James' hand and pledged, "When I get back to Missouri, I'm going to the newspapers in St. Louis and Kansas City and give them the true story!"

After another round of whiskey, Jesse paid, but didn't immediately pocket his big wallet. While Crittenden watched, puzzled, his outlaw client slowly counted out thirty-five thousand dollars on the bar.

"You take this, Tom," Jesse commanded. "I want you to go back to Missouri and run for governor. I'll give you a draft for another thirty-five thousand on my St. Louis bank. Hell's fire, seventy-thousand dollars should be enough to get you elected governor."

The attorney eyed the stack of bills, played with his glass, then looked up and asked, "But why, Jesse?"

"Missouri is in a mess," Jesse replied, lighting another black cigar, "thunder and the dickens, men are still shooting their brothers. Skunks like Charlie Bigelow are robbing and killing and using my name. Tom, we went to school together so I know you're the man to clean up the mess. Besides, you're known as a pro-railroad man. We need more of your kind in office."

Next morning, Jesse and his boys bid goodbye to the attorney, who departed with profuse thanks, thirty-five thousand in cash and a bank draft. Crittenden went back to Missouri and was elected governor, but it was a somewhat empty title because the state was stone broke.

In March of 1882, Jesse and his followers returned secretly to Missouri, and the outlaw easily arranged a night meeting with Governor Crittenden outside Jefferson City.

The governor knew his client had often lived by his guns and had a good head for business, but he wasn't prepared for the highly detailed and radical plan Jesse spread before him.

Jesse took a big chaw of Mickey Twist, rubbed his auburn-colored beard and said, "Consarn it, Governor, you heard me right. Jesse Woodson James must be killed and buried."

Crittenden's hand shook and he stared in disbelief. "But Jesse, my God, man, you are making a cruel and pointless joke. I'll work like hell to get you a full pardon - but I won't be a party to anything like this!"

Jesse stirred in his seat. "Tom, you don't have the juice to get a full pardon for me because Jay Gould was the one who got me outlawed in the first place. I know Jay Gould one hell of a lot better than you do. He used to be a peddler with a pack on his back and walked through our part of Kentucky when I was a kid selling thimbles and thread and stuff like that. Many's the meal he ate at our plantation house. We all loved him, but Jay Gould is now Mr. Big in railroads, telegraph and high finance. He got me outlawed because, as a Rebel soldier in the War Between the States, I hijacked too much of his property. Gould's big with Rothschild and other international bankers. So how is the governor of Missouri going to buck a big man like Jay Gould?"

The Governor drummed his fingers on the table. "I have my ways," he said mysteriously.

"You're sounding more like a politician than you did back in Colorado in '79, Tom. Getting back to my plan, a 'killing' would remove my outlaw status. With Jesse James, the notorious outlaw 'gone', the fear of God would be put into a horde of smalltime bandits and some cocky, big ones. My plan will bring peace to Missouri, Tom."

"Awhile back," Crittenden said, "you said I should offer a ten-thousand dollar reward for your capture. Hell, I don't have ten cents in our Treasury, Jesse!"

"Now don't worry, old friend," Jesse replied. "I'll fix all that, even if I have to put up the reward money. All I want you to do is settle back and go along with my plan. Now listen. Of all the low-down skunks operating in the Mid west, the Bigelow brothers are the worst. Charlie Bigelow isn't satisfied robbing in my name; he kills in cold blood. My boys have a good idea where the Bigelows are holed up. We'll go after them - but I want Charlie Bigelow for myself."

At the time, Charlie Bigelow (using the alias "T. C. Howard"), his wife, and two children were living in a house on Lafayette Street in St. Joseph. Charlie was using the alias, "Tom Howard," borrowed from an honest citizen who had been wrongfully slain by railroad detectives some months before. Bigelow's two brothers, John and Bert, were living with him most of the time. They weren't hurting for money because they had pulled a couple of fairly big jobs. At one time Charlie Bigelow had ridden with Jesse's band, but couldn't be trusted, and Jesse had cut him adrift.

Jesse's agents used various disguises and ruses to spy on the Bigelow brothers. One of Jesse's top railroad detectives, Elmer Johnson, worked as a stonemason across the way from the Lafayette Street house. The brothers were a cautious bunch, but certain patterns and habits were noted and reported to Jesse, who carefully kept in the shadows.

On Saturday night, April 1, 1882, all intelligence reports were rechecked by Jesse James and his inner circle. Jesse puffed on a cigar and gazed at crudely-drawn maps in their hideout a short distance from St. Joseph. He stood up to stretch his legs. "I was kind of hoping we could have sprung the trap on the Bigelows this morning in honor of April Fools Day, but I had to make sure the Bigelows go down to the barn exactly at 8 o'clock every morning." Then he went over the details again with his brother, Dr. Frank, uncle Bud Dalton and John Trammell.

Sunday morning, Jesse went to church in a nearby village. The Kentucky-born outlaw was a strange mixture of man. If necessary, he could kill with no remorse. He'd scheme on business deals, but if he liked you, he'd give you the shirt off his back. Despite his hell-for-leather attitude toward life, Jesse had a highly mystical regard for religion.

Monday, April 3, dawned a beautiful spring morning, and the grass was still wet with dew when Jesse W. James and his men were ready to spring the action scheduled to begin promptly at 8 o'clock. Why did the Bigelows go down to the barn that time each morning? Probably to relieve themselves, Jesse reasoned.

The house and barn were ringed with Jesse's most trusted men. Gen. J. O. Shelby, of Civil War fame whom Jesse had helped rescue from Mexico in 1867, sat nearby in his buggy sipping just enough whisky from a stone jug to "get his circulation going." Sitting beside Shelby was Jesse's brother, Frank James, former Confederate Army surgeon. Near the rear barn door, Jesse had stationed John Trammell, famed bareknuckle fighter whose slave name had been Sam Skates, and Bud Dalton, brother of Lewis Dalton, who spawned the ten brothers who made up the notorious Dalton Gang.

Jesse could picture Trammell with his favorite over-and-under rifle. He was a dead shot. Jesse liked to say, "John can't be beat with a rifle. I used to think he wasn't worth a damn with a pistol, but I learned differently when we brought out Shelby's troopers and Maximilian's gold from Mexico in '67." Dalton's weapons were a pair of six-guns.

Jesse smiled as he went over other members of his supporting cast. There were the three jockeys, Bob and Charlie Ford and a black rider, Lucy Johnson. The Fords' father had tagged along.

In addition to Trammell, were five other black gunslingers, Bill and Charlie Garrett and the three Curtises, Jesse, Frank and Will. Nine Indians lay quietly hidden: top trackers White Eagle, Red Owl and Big Bear Two Hands of the Iowa tribe, plus a half a dozen Chickasaw and Choctaw tribesmen who had served with Jesse in the Civil War.

He whispered to himself, "Anybody that says Indians and blacks can't fight is crazy. My nine Indians and six blacks could lick a whole damn Yankee company!"

Jesse kept counting. There were a dozen railroad detectives, led by Elmer Johnson; the two Hawk brothers from Kentucky, Obediah and Harry; plus Cyclone Denton, Roy Baxter, Theodore Herbert, Frank Mayer, and the Overton brothers.

Perhaps the most illogical member of the cast was a former Union drummer boy who was in the Battle of Gettysburg. Frank Mayer, who died in 1954 at the age of 105, was "converted" to the Confederate cause and on June 25, 1876, he was with General Custer at The Battle of the Little Big Horn under the name of Lt. Frank Crowe. When Custer gave the order to charge, Lt. Crowe and 16 enlisted men, all Confederate sympathizers, pulled out their secret diagonal white and gold flags and escaped the massacre, going through the Indian lines with impunity.

"Dammit," Jesse thought, "I wish old Dingus was here and not laid up recovering from a broken leg at the ranch up in Nebraska. For oldtimes sake, Dingus should be here to see my last official hour on earth."

Standing behind a tree, Jesse pulled out his watch. Five minutes to 8. Then he checked his attire. Beneath his white shirt he wore a metal vest to ward off bullets. A pair of black high-heeled boots made him look taller than his 5 feet 9 1/2 inches. A dark frock coat, partially covering his black trousers, made him a trim 175 pounds. On his head was a Confederate-style white hat, size 7 and one-eighth, creased down the middle.

Jesse took another look around and slowly unbuttoned his frock coat and checked his weapons. A U-shaped harness hung down his chest, holding eight six-shooters, four on each side. Jesse mumbled to himself, "Forty-eight bullets ought to be enough to finish off the Bigelows."

His hand crept up to the back of his neck. He fingered the tips of two razor-sharp knives which fitted upright into a pocket high up the inside back of his coat. If the need arose, Jesse could pull out the knives and throw them with practically the same motion.

Eight o'clock came and still no Bigelows headed for the barn. For a moment, Jesse considered changing the battle plan and rushing the house, but thought better of it. Charlie's wife and two kids were in there, and some nights his brothers brought over lady friends. No use shooting down women and children. His quarrel was with the Bigelows, particularly blood-crazed Charlie.

Jesse peeked from behind the tree down the street to where Big Charlie held Jesse's sorrel chestnut horse, "Red Fox," just in case something went wrong. Jesse looked at the buggy up the street. General Shelby was having another nip and brother Frank was looking at his gold watch. Idly, Jesse took another chew of Mickey Twist. He rubbed the tip of the index finger on his left hand. Right after the Civil War, he got into a knife fight with a Mexican who chewed off the very tip of the finger before Jesse's blade found its mark. But there were lawmen who would swear most of the finger had somehow been shot away.

Suddenly a slamming door broke the morning calm. Jesse's muscles tensed as John and Bert Bigelow left the porch and headed for the barn. A few seconds later, Charlie Bigelow followed them. Ten feet from the front barn door, Charlie stopped short. He took a deep breath, stretched and his eyes scanned the morning sky for a brief few seconds.

Just as Charlie reached the front barn door two shots rang out. Jesse knew the sound of Trammell's rifle, and as he ran toward the barn he found himself thinking, "Consam you, Trammell, don't you dare shoot Charlie - he's mine!"

Jesse cautiously approached the barn's front door from the side of the structure, careful not to give the hated Bigelow too good a target. Then Charlie took a pitchfork and slowly moved the door to a half-open position. As an experienced guerrilla, Jesse was too smart to fall for this trap. Jesse stopped, reached up and pulled his hat down tight over his eyes. He knew he was at a disadvantage. Charlie could see him once he got to the door, but Jesse would have a difficult time making out his adversary, who lurked like a rattlesnake in the dim depths of the barn.

Then Jesse drew back his boot, kicked the door wide open and held his breath waiting for Bigelow to make the next move. Bigelow called out, "Welcome, Jesse-boy, you murderous bastard, I heard you was a-coming. Jus' step inside and I'll collect ten-thousand dollars for blowing your goddam head off!"

To his dying day, August 15, 1951, Jesse couldn't remember what happened next. An eye-witness, "stonemason" Elmer Johnson said, "It all took place so quick I don't know who fired first, but there was a heavy exchange of gunfire." A Bigelow bullet bounced off Jesse's steel vest and slashed at his right shoulder. Then Jesse was in the barn, emptying the pistol in his left hand into a dark form.

For a few seconds there was silence, broken only by the buzzing of blow flies. Then Trammell and Bud Dalton came rushing up from the rear of the barn. Dalton yelled, "Old Sam Skates (John Trammell) got both of 'em with his over-and-under before I could pull the trigger. Jesus, Jesse, you hurt?"

By this time, Dr. James and Jesse's deployed gunmen had converged on the barn. Frank calmly cut away Jesse's new frock coat and white shirt. He found the wound nasty, but not serious. Jesse waited impatiently for his brother to bandage it.

Then he turned to Trammell and Dalton. "Bury those two Bigelow critters out in the weeds behind the barn. Not too deep because we'll probably dig'em up again."

Jesse looked around. He called Bob and Charles Ford to his side and ordered, "Now, boys, listen to me carefully. I want you two to get on your horses and go to downtown St. Jo and sit outside the marshal's office. And Bob, I want you to repeat a few times, 'I just shot Jesse James.' Nothing more - just those words I told you. Now get going."

Bob Ford, who stood 5 feet 4 inches and weighed about 115 pounds, protested, "Look here, Jesse, I ain't never shot nobody in my whole life. Why me? I ain't even got a gun!"

Jesse was agitated and spoke sharply, "Consarn it, Bob, I don't care if you ever shot anybody or not. You get downtown right now. You hear?" Then Jesse handed Ford a Smith & Wesson .44 revolver.

John Trammell came into the barn and stood a shovel against the wall. "Sweah to God, Colonel, suh, but dat Bud Dalton he de laziest man ah ever did see. Ain't enough ah have to shoot dem two Bigelows, but ah bury 'em, too!"

Jesse laughed and put his good left arm around Trammell's shoulder. "Thanks, John, you coal-black son of Satan. One more thing. I'll see that Bud helps you carry bloody Charlie into the house. The rest of you men scatter back to the hideout. Come on, Bud, dammit, lend a hand, you hear?"

Before they reached the porch, Jesse spat out his chewing tobacco and said, "Hey, Bud, I got to have a cigar. Shoulder kind of hurts. Don't think I can light the dad-burned thing by myself. Give me a hand."

Then Jesse mounted the porch and kicked in the door. He ordered Trammell and Dalton to deposit Bigelow's bloody body on the parlor floor before the horrified eyes of Mrs.

Bigelow.

Jesse whispered, "Now, I want you boys to head down to Kearney by the old river road and fetch my Aunt Zerelda (Cole James Samuels). She'll fight like a wildcat, but bring her here fast as you can - even if you have to hogtie her!"

While Mrs. Bigelow screamed and moaned, Jesse took a big pull on his cigar and blew a giant smoke ring. He nodded to Bud Dalton, who pulled out his six-gun and fired two shots into the wall. Mrs. Bigelow grew quiet, perhaps expecting to be killed.

Now Jesse turned his full attention to the widow. "So we meet again, Mrs. Zerelda Mimms Bigelow. I know what you were working at when Charlie married you - but that's all in the past, Zerelda. We are concerned only with the future this morning, Zerelda.

"Get this straight, ma'm, because I'm only going to tell you once. This dead man here on the floor is your husband, Jesse Woodson James. Hereafter, you will be known as Mrs. Jesse Woodson James. Your son has become Jesse E. James and your daughter, Mary James."

The widow's face became distorted, but Jesse ignored her and kept talking. "Now I'm giving you fifteen-thousand dollars which should keep you for a long time, but I'm taking Charlie's prize horse, 'Siroc', as part of the bargain. Now get this straight. If you ever reveal our little secret, you'll be executed just like a man. Knowing your background and breeding, Zerelda, you'll probably try to blackmail me - but it won't work. If you try it, I'll kill you and you and Charlie Bigelow will rest side-by-side on my aunt's farm. Do you understand me?"

Zerelda Bigelow, suddenly Mrs. Jesse W. James, shook from fright, but took the money and promised to keep her lips sealed forever.

"Just a damn minute, Mrs. James," Jesse said after blowing another smoke ring, "when the law comes by this'll be the story you'll tell. You and your husband, Jesse W. James, were holed up here and he was using the name 'Tom Howard'."

Jesse stopped and looked around the parlor and his eyes rested on the two bullet holes Bud Dalton had put near the "God Bless Our Home" plaque. "And," Jesse continued, "here's how Jesse James was killed. He was dusting off that motto there when Bob Ford, who was visiting you folks along with his brother, Charley, plugged Jesse from behind."

His shoulder ached as he paced back and forth across the low-ceiling parlor, carefully avoiding Bigelow's body. He stopped and glared at the widow. "Think you can remember all that, Mrs. Jesse James? You better if you want to stay alive. In about an hour there will be quite a circus here. Lawmen all over the place, but there will be a certain pair of eyes watching you - so be careful! Now go in the back of the house, take care of your kids and wait for the law to come. Never mind what goes on here in the meantime, you hear?"

With the widow gone, Jesse suddenly became aware of Bud Dalton standing inside the parlor door. "Damn you, Bud, didn't I tell you and Trammell to head down Kearney way?"

Dalton grinned. "I sent John by himself. Besides, I didn't want to leave you with that bad shoulder, Jesse."

"Well," Jesse mumbled, "I'm glad you stayed. You heard the story Zerelda Bigelow will tell. Now pick up Charlie and put him up there against that wall."

After completing the gruesome task, Dalton wiped his bloody hands on his shirt tail and said, "Dammit, Jesse, this here Bigelow sure as hell don't look much like you. Besides the middle finger on his left hand is chopped off. I doubt if the whole thing is going to work."

"Never mind," Jesse snapped, "with all the hysteria, fussing and crying, it'll work alright. Just wait and see."

Jesse's cigar had gone out and Bud relit it for him. "There's another thing, Jesse, is it possible you're getting senile at 38? Like sending me and Trammell off to fetch Aunt Zerelda Samuels. My God, Kearney is 40 miles off as the crow flies - he won't be back for a couple of days and all the while Bob and Charley Ford are downtown telling People that Jesse James is dead. Sometimes I can't figure You out, cousin."

Despite the sore shoulder, Jesse threw back his head in laughter. "I had to give you and Trammell something to do. Since You're here, Trammell will meet Aunt Zerelda on the old river road not too far from St. Jo."

"Bow do you figure that, Jesse?"

"Simple, Bud, because I had two of our men pick her up two days ago. They know the timetable. She should be arriving here any minute now if my schedule is right. Can't say I look forward to seeing the old she-goat. When she dies, she'll probably become the devil's chief assistant stoking the fires of hell."

Jesse was getting anxious, but barely 15 minutes later Mrs. Samuels arrived at the Lafayette Street house, fire in her eye. When she saw Charlie Bigelow's body on the parlor floor she let loose a scream resembling that of a wounded panther.

"Now you just quiet down, Aunt Zerelda," Jesse commanded gently, "and remember the man you see here on the floor is your lovable nephew, Jesse Woodson James, and you'll testify that way when the law and Sheriff Jim Timberlake get here. And you want the funeral in the Kearey Baptist Church and the burial in your front yard four miles out of town, because Jesse Woodson was always your favorite nephew."

A troublesome, neurotic woman throughout her life, Mrs. Samuels at first refused to go

along with the plot. Then Bud Dalton held out a thousand dollars and asked, "Would this make you change your mind, Auntie?"

Zerelda seized the wad of bills and exclaimed, "Goodness, I ain't never Seen so much cash money in my whole life!" Jesse and Dalton sighed with relief.

Jesse looked at his watch, Quickly glanced out the window and nodded to Dalton. As the men moved toward the door, Aunt Zerelda let out another whoop and began wailing again. It took another five-hundred dollars to shut her up.

Once outside, Jesse and Dalton made for their horses and the outlaw leader said, "You know, Bud, I'm glad you didn't follow orders. With my bad shoulder, I'll need help from both you and Big Charley getting into my uniform." "What in hell's fire are you talking about, Jesse?"

"Untie that bedroll back of the saddle on Red Fox. In a few moments, I will have become the elegant Captain Harrison Trow, special aide to His Excellency, Gov. T. T. Crittenden of Missouri."

Dalton helped Big Charley get him dressed, but he muttered, "You'll end up getting yourself killed, Jesse!"

"Fine prophet you are, Bud. Remember, I'm already dead. The body over there in the parlor proves it."

Minutes later, Jesse stood magnificently in a gaudy, semi-military uniform. He turned to Dalton, "Now you and Big Charley get back to the hideout and keep an eye on things. If Dr. Frank hasn't been drinking, take him aside and tell him about this because it wasn't in our plans Saturday night."

Throughout his life, Jesse W. James was noted for his exits, but he could make a dramatic entrance, too. No sooner had two local lawmen ridden warily up to Bigelow's front porch than Captain Harrison Trow of the governor's office strode into the room. From that moment Trow took charge.

"It's Jesse James all right. I met him twice down in the mountains. See the middle finger on his left hand is off," Captain Trow said as a crowd of curious townspeople gathered outside.

"Just a damn minute. Jesse's left index finger was off," an assistant marshal protested.

"Shows how little you know about Jesse James. Did you ever meet him? I bet you didn't," Trow replied. The lawman said nothing.

But his "official duties" didn't keep "Captain Trow" from staring into the startled eyes of the two Zereldas.

When frustrated lawmen begged for more time to examine the corpse and the bullet holes in the wall, Captain Trow hurried them on. "Remember, Governor Crittenden, who has posted ten-thousand dollars reward money, is extremely interested in this case, I suggest the body of Jesse James be sent to Sidenfaden's Undertaking Parlor at once. The coroner has to check the body, too, you know."

Aunt Zerelda told the lawmen, "Beyond a doubt, this is the body of my dear son, Jesse Woodson James." Jesse had to restrain himself from grabbing his aunt by the throat. He'd heard rumors she was claiming him as her son. Her son was Jesse Robert James, better known as "Dingus."

Mrs. Zerelda Bigelow, alias Mrs. Jesse W. James, faithfully repeated three times the story of the shooting.

Feeling in downtown St. Joseph ran high against Bob and Charles Ford the ex-jockeys, and indignant residents might have lynched them for killing Jesse James, but a constable mercifully tossed them into jail on a murder charge.

Capt. Harrison Trow, once the situation on Lafayette Street was under control, made his exit quietly as possible. Out of sight, he stopped in a small grove, stuffed his military cap into a saddle bag, tossed a blanket over his shoulders and rode back to where his band was holed up.

In later years, Jesse recalled, "My shoulder was hurting and I was never more tired in my life. Being 'murdered' is one thing - but it was all the excitement that wore me down."

After sleeping four hours, Jesse got up and called his men together. "Fellows, you are looking at your new leader. Jesse James is dead - killed on Lafayette Street this morning. In a few days, I'll think up a new name - in fact, I got one in mind right now. I want you-all to keep our little secret. In a few days we'll be heading West again where we got railroads to build, mines to work and ranches to run. I want to thank you-all for the good job that was done in St. Jo this morning."

For the next two days while the inquest droned on under the direction of Coroner Heddens, Jesse sent band members into St. Jo to gather information. The day before the scheduled funeral of Jesse James, he had one of his men cut his hair and shave off his beard. Then Dr. Frank inserted a false lower plate on Jesse's jaw which made his lower lip protrude. It was a disguise Jesse would use often in the next half century.

"What are you getting so gussied up for?" Frank asked.

"Why, I gotta go see myself buried," Jesse replied.

"You wouldn't dare!"

"The heck I wouldn't," Jesse said, looking into a mirror.

On his way to the funeral in Kearney, two farmers in a wagon stopped Jesse to borrow a couple of matches and one said, "I heard tell twasn't Jesse James at all that was killed in St. Jo Monday. Heard it on good authority that old Jesse got plumb away."

"If it wasn't Jesse, who was it then?" the horseman asked.

"Dunno," the Missourian replied, "mebbe one of his men. Who knows? Well, anyway, old Jesse ain't dead, and I'm glad."

As he headed down the old river road, Jesse scratched his smooth-shaven chin. Who was doing the talking? Bigelow's widow? Hardly, she was still too scared. Probably old Aunt Zerelda and her flapping mouth.

Jesse arrived early for the funeral. Charlie Bigelow, alias Tom Howard, wasn't exactly the best-loved citizen in northwest Missouri but as the dead Jesse W. James he attracted a great deal of attention.

Beardless Jesse, his lower lip protruding and dressed intentionally in homespun clothes, approached the parson, who was talking to a veteran lawman, and asked politely to serve as pallbearer. "After all," he said, "Jesse James was my cousin."

The lawman looked at him and nodded. "You do look like a James at that. If it's all right with Parson Martin here, you'll do."

Jesse lined up on the right side of the coffin. His right shoulder still hurt. Across from him was Deputy Marshal J. T. Reed, whom Jesse had met some years before, but Reed didn't recognize him. Once the pallbearers were seated, Jesse quietly moved up into the choir and joined in the singing of hymns.

From this vantage point, the outlaw could get a better view of the mourners. His eyes rested on Charlie's widow, Zerelda, who had come down from St. Jo on the funeral train the day before. She suddenly turned his way and her eyes grew wide in recognition. Then she coughed and turned away.

Halfway across the Baptist Church, Jesse made out Charlie Bigelow's old father whose eyes were swollen and filled with tears. The old man would hardly be crying for Jesse James. From time to time, the elderly Bigelow wiped his eyes with a crumpled hankerchief.

For a moment, Jesse felt panic. What if the old man rushed forward to the pulpit and denounced the funeral as a hoax and told the assembled mourners that it was his son, Charlie Bigelow, who lay dead in the casket, and not the outlaw Jesse W. James?

Then the minister, The Rev. J. M. Martin, cognizant of Jesse James' reputation as a Robin

Hood who robbed the rich and gave to Missouri's poor, began a stirring eulogy and there was barely a dry eye in the church. Jesse felt relieved.

Years later, when he was an old, old man, Jesse told his kin, "You know, I still remember the nice words that preacher had to say about me - it almost made me cry right on the spot."

At an appropriate time, Jesse left the choir and rejoined the pallbearers. This time Marshal Reed gave him a long look. After Jesse had helped consign himself to the grave, he rode north to where his companions were holed up, composing a ditty on the way: "But that dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard has laid poor Jesse in the grave."

Once he met three horsemen on the road and he absentmindedly sang the ditty. They turned to stare, but Jesse rode on. Within a week, a songwriter, Billy Gashade, had ground out a ballad and the song became an overnight sensation in James-conscious Missouri and before long it had spread around the world.

Back in the hideout at dawn after an all-night ride, Jesse sought out Bud Dalton and Dr. Frank and soberly told them about the funeral which had gone off without a hitch. "There were several hundred people who couldn't get in the church and stood outside - I don't know if I was that popular or that notorious."

Dalton already had organized a "work party" for that evening. Jesse lit a cigar and said, "Darn it, Bud, we ought to stop calling each other 'cousin'. You're my uncle, you know."

The former Confederate general, tall and lanky, laughed. "Heck, Jesse, cousin is fine with me. If you called me uncle I'd just feel older, that's all."

Jesse smiled. "Okay, cousin, have it your own way."

The work party, led by Dalton, dug up the bodies of the two Bigelow brothers from behind the Lafayette Street barn and put them into a farm wagon containing junk and two of Jesse's men set out for Aunt Zerelda Samuels' farm outside Kearney.

A couple of nights later, Dalton's men were digging a deep hole in Zerelda Samuels' front yard. "Deeper, men," Dalton ordered, "because Jesse wants it 12 feet deep. And he wants Charlie Bigelow buried on top of his brothers."

When Aunt Zerelda came out on the porch with a lantern to see what was going on, Jesse came out of the darkness and stood close to her.

"Oh, it's you, Jesse. My, what a lot of dirt - what's going on?"

"Mother, I thought you'd know. You are my mother, aren't you?"

Even in lantern light, horse-faced Zerelda Samuels in no way resembled Jesse Woodson

James' handsome Georgia-born mother. She drew back as if she expected Jesse to slap her.

Jesse's eyes blazed in the darkness. "You old she-dog, you've been telling folks in northwest Missouri for years now that I'm your son. I don't consider it a compliment coming from a woman with your reputation, Zerelda!"

Zerelda whimpered, "Well, leastways, I'm telling 'em you're dead, ain't I?"

Jesse's cigar glowed angrily in the dark. "I hear you're telling it the other way now that the funeral is over."

The Kentuckian stood for a moment watching the men dig. Then he said to his aunt, "All three Bigelows, with Charlie on top, are being buried right here in your yard under the coffee-bean tree just as a reminder to you to keep your big mouth shut."

"But there's so much dirt, Jesse!"

"That's so the wolves won't dig 'em up."

"My goodness - wolves?"

"Yup, the two-legged kind. I have something else to say to you."

His cigar end burned in the dark. He looked at the old woman holding the lantern with her good left arm. The right one had been partially blown off as the result of some devilment by Pinkerton detectives many years before.

"Look, Aunt Zerelda," he Finally said, "I'm giving you another five-hundred dollars tonight. That'll make two-thousand in hush money. But one more peep out of you and we'll be digging your grave out there!"

She drew back. "Are you threatening me, Jesse?"

"Yes," Jesse said, icily, "because you are digging your own grave by talking. This is my final warning to you, Aunt Zerelda. I'd shoot you like I'd shoot a yellow dog!"

Aunt Zerelda embarked on a more sinister gam'e, blackmail. Jesse, his "death" behind him, launched himself heavily into the booming economy of the West - but Zerelda's blackmailing letters eventually were brought to his attention.

Some years later - Jesse as an old man couldn't remember the exact date, he ordered Zerelda Samuels executed and one of his agents poisoned the troublesome old witch. The coroner, noting her age, called it a heart attack. "But," Colonel James said, "it was a metallic poison so I imagine if somebody dug up Zerelda's grave they'd find the poison somewhere in the dust of death."

Because of the public outcry, poor Bob Ford and his brother, Charles, were tried and convicted of the murder of Jesse W. James. Immediately, Governor Crittenden pardoned them. The Fords didn't get the reward money because there wasn't any. A couple of prominent historians asked the question, "Who did get the reward money?" The governor remained silent. Jesse James did give Bob and Charles each \$250 as a bonus for being in jail and standing the rigors of the ordeal. After the full pardon, Bob Ford joined Jesse in Colorado and Jesse hired his cousin, A. B. Ford, to "stand in" for the short Bob Ford. A. B. was 6 feet tall and was lefthanded, but nobody noticed.



John Trammell, 117 holds trusty rifle in Guthrie, Okla.

Chapter 2

The Grim Aftermath

"Jus' wait 'til dey find dem St. Jo bricks!"

Barely a week after the "death" of Jesse Woodson James in St. Joseph, Missouri, April 3, 1882, this prophecy spread like wildfire through the Negro shantytowns of Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, south to Louisiana and Texas, east to Kentucky and Tennessee and west to Colorado.

Throughout his life Jesse James appeared a white Robin Hood to Mississippi River Basin blacks. He always had a few dollars for an old Negro couple down on its luck or a job for a young black with a family to raise. Whether you accept history's death date for Jesse, April 3, 1881, or August 15, 1951, there is no written or spoken record of Jesse Woodson James mistreating a Negro. The blacks loved him, along with the Indians and the Mexican-Americans who worked on his ranches and in his mines.

"Just wait 'til dey find dem St. Jo bricks!" What did it all mean? Were some bricks lost? Who would find what bricks? Where did the prophecy originate?

It started with John Trammell, one of Jesse James' most trustworthy friends and bodyguards and one of the greatest bareknuckle fighters of all time. It was Trammell, the black giant, who gunned down Bert and John Bigelow in the St. Joseph barn while his hero killed the hated Charlie Bigelow.

Before Trammell pulled out for Colorado with Jesse's inner circle he told two Negro friends outside St. Joseph, "people know de whole truth - jus' wait 'til dey find dem St. Jo bricks!" It passed from Negro to Negro from state to state, but no white lawman ever heard it from a black man's lips.

When his boss, Jesse, left to attend his own funeral in Kearney, the thought came to Trammell that some sort of true record of what really happened on Lafayette Street should be left. But how? John Trammell could neither read nor write, but he could sign his name; however, he preferred to use a witnessed 'X'.

Jesse was far down the river road bound for Kearney so Trammell decided to enlist the support of Bud Dalton. There was a brick kiln in St. Joseph and John had a short acquaintance with a Negro worker. "It's easy, Mistah Bud. We-all git de wet bricks, write de story. Den bury 'em where we kill de Bigelows."

To humor Jesse's loyal friend, Dalton went along with Trammell's plan. When the giant black man brought back six "wet bricks," Dalton carved a series of messages

on the promise that Trammell would never tell his nephew, Jesse, about the scheme. "In fact," Dalton said, "John, you black satan, you promise you'll never tell no white man!" Trammell promised. And he kept his word.

That night, while other members of the band slept, John Trammell "toasted" the bricks in the dying embers and ashes of the campfire. It was a crude job because the Negro knew nothing about a kiln. Because the bricks still appeared spongy, Trammell carefully put each of the six bricks into a sack, picked up a spade, got on his horse and headed for Lafayette Street in St. Joseph. Shortly before dawn he had buried all six bricks without encountering anyone.

"Jus' wait 'til dey find dem St. Jo bricks!" It was a long wait. The tell-tale bricks remained undiscovered until the summer of 1966 when Charles E. Mason, a great-grandson of Jesse W. James dug up the first one.

Emotions ran high in Missouri even after Jesse was "dead and buried" and the uproar increased. There was considerable guessing that the St. Joseph incident was a hoax. The whole situation was complicated because there were four Jesse Jameses - all cousins - operating in Missouri during the Civil War and/or the postwar period. There were the outlaws, Jesse Woodson James, born on a plantation near Frankfort, Kentucky, April 17, 1844; his first cousin and the son of Zerelda Cole James Samuels, Jesse Robert (Dingus) James; Dr. Jesse Howard James; and Jesse Ballard James.

The St. Joseph hoax went off without a hitch, but almost immediately tongues began to wag. Missouri-born Jesse Robert (Dingus) James, alias Joseph L. Dines, was recuperating from a broken leg on a Nebraska ranch in April, 1882. In May, he sent a clipping to his notorious cousin, Jesse Woodson James, in Colorado. It had appeared in the Nebraska City, Nebraska News, on April 29, 1882, and read, "The latest sensation is a letter from a brother-in-law of Jesse James to a friend at Council Bluffs, Iowa, in which he says that Jesse James is still alive, ate dinner in his home the day the shooting of the alleged Jesse James took place at St. Joseph, Mo., and that they had quite a laugh over the affair."

Major John Edwards, dubbed by historians as a Confederate veteran and unreconstructed Southerner, wrote in his Sedalia, Missouri, Democrat: "I wish Jesse were still alive to make a righteous butchery of a few more of them!" Who was Major Edwards? None other than Kentucky Frank James (or Dr. Sylvester Franklin James). It is not surprising he would defend his brother, Jesse Woodson James, but the important thing is that he got away with his blistering editorials and emotional pro-Jesse speeches.

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat and St. Joseph Herald editorially disapproved of Gov. T. T. Crittenden "hiring assassins" to do what authorities had failed to do. The Howell County Journal wrote: "The great parallel that will go down in history will be Crittenden and James, and the very ashes of Jesse James will cry out in disgust

and righteous indignation at the comparison. The Ford boys should be tried as other criminals and Governor Crittenden with them as an accessory before the fact!"

Only 11 days after the St. Joseph hoax, the Liberty Tribune commented: "Certain parties still aver that Jesse James is not dead, and intimate that the man killed and buried was not Jesse, but someone inveigled into Jesse's house and killed, to get the reward. Such a conclusion would implicate Mrs. James, Mrs. Samuels, Governor Crittenden, Sheriff Timberlake, Police Commissioner Craig and others in a scheme of fraud and perjury. We believe nothing of the kind and have no doubt of Jesse's death."

William A· Settle, Jr., an excellent and fastidious modern-day historian, looks back with the comment: "It was hardly to be expected that Crittenden would go unscathed for his role in Jesse's death, and quickly the wrath of detractors struck him."

Of course, Jesse Woodson James' descendants claim that Crittenden was very much a part of the St. Joseph hoax. Why else did the Missouri governor waste no time granting the "killers" Bob and Charley Ford, a full and unconditional pardon after they had been sentenced to hang on April 17 for the "murder" of Jesse James?

Jesse's descendants point out that Governor Crittenden was merely standing fast in the March, 1882, agreement he made with Jesse James. Crittenden was considered a "liberal" Democrat, but the Confederate wing of the Democratic Party was still a strong influence in Missouri. Crittenden, a political animal in a hostile, emotionally-charged climate, could hardly have admitted being a party to the St. Joseph "hoax." This would have been political suicide. Moreover, Crittenden was tied in with big railroad money, which was justified by his backers because Missouri had long been a starting point for ventures into the West.

The Richmond Conservator and other newspapers hastened to Crittenden's defense - it was not a one-sided fray. The Conservator wrote: "The Quantrill wing of the Democracy is dissatisfied because an ex-Union soldier (Crittenden) has brought its chief and pride to bay."

But the Austin, Texas, Siftings published a page 1 drawing of Jesse portrayed as an angel. Borne aloft by wings, he carried a huge revolver in one hand and a rifle in the other. Reproductions of the drawing were widely circulated in Missouri.

The St. Joseph "hoax" ruined Crittenden's political career. He was a one-term governor of Missouri. In the autumn of 1885, the Missouri Democratic delegation in Congress recommended that Crittenden be given an appointment in the diplomatic service, but President Grover Cleveland curtly replied he could not consider Crittenden for a diplomatic post because in the East "people believed he had bargained with the Fords for the killing of Jesse James." When things cooled down, Crittenden was appointed Consul-General in Mexico City, serving from 1893 to

1897.

Throughout the James ordeal, Crittenden, either because of courage, loyalty or fear, stuck by the bargain he had struck with Jesse James. At any time during the grim aftermath of St. Joseph incident, Jesse W. James could have ruined the governor by disclosing their secret pact and the fact that the outlaw had given Crittenden \$70,000 to run for the governorship in the first place. But the governor kept his bargain and Jesse kept his.

There is ample reason to believe that Jesse W. James and Crittenden remained life-long friends. Was T. T. Crittenden the "high-priced lawyer" who went to St. Paul, Minnesota, to arrange for the three Dodson brothers of Kansas City to "stand in" in 1876 for the three Youngers brothers in Stillwater Prison after the Northfield bank fiasco? Although mellow in his waning years, old Jesse James refused to say. He did comment, "I always had the highest regard for my old schoolmate, attorney and friend, Tom Crittenden."

"Jus' wait 'til dey find dem St. Jo bricks!" Well, three of the six bricks have been found and their message announced to the world. Most of the pieces that made up Jesse W. James' jigsaw puzzle life extending from his "murder" on April 3, 1882, to his death on August 15, 1951, have fallen into place.

What message did the bricks contain? One brick announced the death of John Bigelow, Charles Bigelow and Bert Bigelow, but no precise date was given. Another brick contained an image of a Spanish dagger, the numerals 777, KGC and JJ. Of course, KGC and JJ stood for Knights of the Golden Circle and Jesse James.

"The experts be damned," the James family says, "they have kept our story too long in the musty shadows of so called history. Our story is one that needs to be told. The world has the right to hear it...and judge it."

Chapter 3

Jesse 'Emerges' From The Shadows

Eleven years had passed since the St. Joseph hoax. It was 1893 and three men were seated in a private railway coach at Chicago's Columbia Exposition or World's Fair. Outside the bright lights of the midway and the shouts and laughter of thousands of delighted patrons created excitement in the night.

There was excitement in the railway coach, too. Buffalo Bill Cody, 48, and a year younger than his guest, poured another drink and shook his finger at Robert E. Lee, his 18 year-old bodyguard.

"And to think, Bobby, you were about to shoot my friend here," the man with the flowing hair and large goatee exclaimed. "My God, son, this man is the real honest-to-God Jesse James, one of the original backers of my Wild West Show."

The young man stirred uneasily. "Well, sir, I had no way of knowing your orders have been to keep people from coming into the railroad car."

Jesse lit a long, black cigar and grinned, "Take it easy on young Mr. Lee. I was kind of pushy so he was just doing his job."

Buffalo Bill chuckled. "Well, it's a damn good thing you didn't tell him you were Jesse James." Turning to young Lee, he said, "Jesse here is the deadliest shot in the West. Fellow that used to work for me, Wild Bill Hickock, once thought he was." Cody turned to Jesse and winked.

Robert E. Lee refilled the visitor's glass with brandy. Then he stepped back, but kept his ears open. The two old friends talked for an hour about famous characters of the West. What they told wasn't history as young Lee had been taught. How could his teachers have been so wrong? Fifty- five years later Lee was still wondering.

"Bill," Jesse finally said, "how'd you like a real attraction for a few weeks?"

"Always looking for talent, you know that. Got somebody in mind?"

"Yup, me!"

"You?" Cody hastily put his glass down. "You mean Jesse James reveals himself?"

"That's what I had in mind, Bill."

Cody thoughtfully stroked his goatee. "Jesse, my friend, if you did that you'd be a bigger

damn fool than I know you are!"

His guest lit his fourth cigar of the visit. "Looka here, Bill, it's been 11 years since St. Jo which means I been legally dead for four years."

"You forget one thing, Jesse. Murder is an open charge you could still be hung, my friend", Cody protested.

"Hell's fire, I'm tired of running around the country using dozens of aliases. I've even got three or four doubles."

Cody reached over and placed his hand on Jesse's shoulder. "And you're damnable successful from what I've heard and from what you told me here tonight. Get this silly idea out of your head. You still have some powerful enemies. You're only 49 - wait a few more years until some of them have died off. Plenty of time left, Jesse. Go on having fun and making money. You got a hell of a great head for business."

Jesse spent three weeks as Buffalo Bill's guest and the multi-millionaire even gave shooting exhibitions at Cody's show. Robert E. Lee recalled years later that he was disturbed by the fact that Buffalo Bill, when he had been drinking, openly introduced his sharpshooter as "the real Jesse James" to some of his friends.

But Jesse accepted his old friend's advice and went on helping to shape the history of the West, but about a dozen years after his Chicago talk with Buffalo Bill the bug to "emerge" again hit the outlaw. He hired a "high-priced lawyer with political influence" and dispatched him to Washington.

The lawyer asked the U.S. Attorney-General, "What would you say if I told you that Jesse James is my client?"

"I'd say you were either a damn liar or had been out in the sun too long!"

Jesse's attorney bored in with facts, laid out documents and argued to no avail. The Attorney-General said, "You're wasting my time. Jesse James is legally dead and that is that!"

When the lawyer reported his lack of success to his client, the outlaw snorted, "The next time I try it I'll get a real lawyer and not a damn shyster!"

In 1936 when Jesse was 92 he attended a Confederate convention in East Texas and the old soldiers sat around for three days and nights swapping tales of the War Between the States. The old warrior was openly accepted as Jesse James. After all, most of the old vets had known him most of their lives.

Four years later in 1940, Col. J. Frank Dalton finally decided to make his move. Although he was 96 and suffering from a broken right hip, he gathered up his documents,

got DeWitt Travis (Quantrill's youngest son) to drive him, and headed toward Missouri for what he called "the showdown." On the way, their car became involved in an accident and the old man returned home disappointed. But Jesse was talking to relatives and friends, revealing his secret past. He even lectured throughout Texas, admitting he was "the real Jesse James." "Colonel Dalton," long a favorite of the Texas Rangers, had opened a hole in the dike. His long-kept secret was beginning to seep through.

Mrs. Nellie Shevlin, wife of John Shevlin, a fearless frontier lawman, through her connections with the Texas Cattlemen's Association, began to suspect that Col. J. Frank Dalton and Jesse James were the same man. Mrs. Shevlin took photographs and her suspicions to Ray Palmer, editor and publisher of Search Magazine, and the digging for corroboration was launched. Other newspaper and magazine reporters did what historians had never bothered to do - they began digging and assembling files.

And the inevitable happened. Relatives, who had helped keep Dalton's true identity a secret, began making demands on the old warrior, knowing he was an incredibly wealthy man. Jesse James III recalls, "Throughout his life - at least during the many years I lived with him - Grandpa had a sunny disposition. Now he became moody and cantankerous.

"He kept saying, 'You know, I've lived nine or ten lives and I've had nine or ten burials - that's the way I got rid of an assumed name. So it would be nice to die under my right name - Jesse Woodson James'."

So while old Jesse fretted and fumed, Jesse III and the outlaw's old cronies began assembling documents, letters, photographs and affidavits. His grandson says, "Having lived with the old man almost since the moment of my birth, it was hard for me to be objective about his true identity. Some things you just know - and I had known for more than thirty years that he was Jesse Woodson James."

In 1947 the old man fell and again broke his right hip following a night out with the boys. Cataracts, which had plagued him in the early days of the Civil War, reappeared and he was slowly going blind.

Former lawman John Shevlin refused to be hurried. Patiently he studied photographs of the old "Colonel Dalton" and the young Jesse James. He noted that facial features and ear characteristics were very similar. And the lost tip of Dalton's left forefinger checked out.

In a separate action, Jesse III had taken his crippled grandfather to Lawton, Oklahoma, and tipped reporters at The Lawton Constitution who were busy with a three- week investigation of the old man's claims. Search Magazine Publisher Palmer sent Shevlin to Lawton to personally check out Jesse Frank Dalton. Shevlin wired Palmer on May 18, 1948, "He is our man." Palmer went to radio station WMAQ in Chicago where the 10:15 p.m. news broadcast was preempted and the sensational news that Jesse W. James was still alive was spread across the airwaves.

The next day, Wednesday, May 19, 1948, The Lawton Constitution's page 1 banner read,

"Jesse James is Alive! In Lawton" The wire services picked up the story and old Jesse, finally emerged with a flourish, received excellent, if controversial coverage, all over the world. Newsmen pounded on his door day and night, and oldtimers flocked to Lawton. Parades were held in Oklahoma and the old outlaw thoroughly enjoyed the attention.

But Publisher Ray Palmer's "scoop" netted him little. In the September, 1968, issue of Search Magazine, Palmer recalls: "I signed a contract with Jesse to write his life story, and he handed me a shoe box containing ten thousand dollars in fives, tens and twenties to cover the cost of publication. I never published the book, for a reason I will explain. I still have the cancelled check I sent back to Meremac, Missouri, when the contract was broken.

"This was not the only broken contract. Upon my return to Chicago with the money, I went to Clarence Budd, who was...preparing a giant Railroad Fair for Chicago. I convinced him that Jesse was really Jesse, that he had repented for his life of crime, and had commissioned me to write his life story.

"Mr. Budd was enthusiastic and a contract was signed for Jesse to appear at the fair. Apparently Jesse was still a crook at heart, because he double-crossed us and informed Budd he would charge \$1 a head to let people go through the car to see him. Very angry, Budd called the whole thing off.

"Then I confronted Jesse with his broken word and discovered that he also had signed contracts with three other individuals to do his life story in book form. And he also signed movie rights over to them. I was to be convinced of the truth of this when one of the 'contractees' came to visit me in Evanston, toting a gun in a holster and a very ugly disposition. I discovered then not all of the Jesse James gang was inactive!

"I returned Jesse's money to him. A third contract was broken between Jesse, myself and Ziff-Davis Publishing Company who were enthusiastic about the prospect of publishing 'Jesse James Western' with Jesse himself as editor! This contract, too, went down the drain...from that moment on I buried Jesse James again, insofar as I was concerned."

The two Lawton, Oklahoma, Constitution reporters, Frank O. Hall and Lindsey H. Whitten, who "proved" Dalton was James, fared better than Ray Palmer, but were taken in by some "whoppers" told by the old outlaw.

The young reporters published an attractive booklet, "Jesse James Rides Again," priced at \$1. Sales were heavy. At 104, Jesse still had piercing steel-blue eyes and possessed a keen mind. Hall and Whitten cannot be blamed for printing the inaccuracies that the old man told them. Just prior to his death, Jesse told his grandson, "Well, I had to lie a little bit. Some of the boys who rode with me were still alive and they could end up behind prison bars - or worse."

For instance, Jesse told the Lawton reporters that on September 5, 1914, at the age of 67 he enlisted in the Canadian army and fought four years in Europe, emerging a lieutenant-

colonel. More incredible, he said he learned to fly and spent the final 22 months of World War I in the Royal Air Force.

Actually, Jesse stayed in the U.S. and patriotically sold war bonds in both World War I and II. He did learn to pilot a plane, but the man who once held the fastest guns in the West couldn't get his license because of "bad coordination." He never attempted to drive a car.

Old Jesse told Hall and Whitten that after the Civil War he joined the U.S. Fifth Cavalry. Some historians seized upon this as a "whopper." But this was the truth. Using an assumed name, probably "Sergeant Lawrence Schofield," he never advanced beyond the rank of sergeant because he was an ex-Confederate. In a few months he "bought his way out." He more likely simply deserted. "I had a reason for joining the Yankees," he told his family, "because there were some things I had to set up."

The Lawton reporters wrote that the famous outlaw "graduated with honors from the University of Michigan" in law because he tried medicine and "couldn't stand the sight of blood." Actually, Jesse, using the name, J. H. James, did get a medical diploma from Missouri Medical College, but studied only enough law for his own use.

Jesse also portrayed himself as a soldier of fortune to the Oklahoma newsmen. He said he fought in the Beer War on the side of the Dutch, rose to the rank of colonel in the Brazilian army, etc. He said he once fought the Hottentots, "that fierce tribe in Africa and the only people I ever ran from." But Jesse hadn't done these things - he was merely covering up for old compadres still alive.

In all, an estimated thirty-thousand people thronged Lawton for a look or an interview with Jesse James. On July 7, 1948, Guthrie, Oklahoma, staged a giant parade in honor of the emerged outlaw. RKO movie stars waved at the crowds. It was a gala event. Al Jennings, the reformed outlaw; Jim Thorpe, the famous Indian athlete and Captain Roy Aldrich of the Texas Rangers all came forward to identify their long-time friend as the real Jesse James.

Riding in the second car at the Guthrie parade was another famous outlaw, William H. Bonney, better known as Billy the Kid. History says Billy was slain by Pat Garrett at the age of 22 in Ft. Sumner, N. M., July 14, 1881, but "the Kid" lived a full life as "Brushy Bill" Roberts. In fact, he resided next door to Jesse James for six years of his life. Both old men knew the other's secret.

John Trammell, the ex-slave and Jesse's trusted friend and bodyguard who killed Bert and John Bigelow during the St. Joseph hoax on April 3, 1882, was also in Guthrie to identify "Colonel Dalton" as Jesse James. When he met "the colonel," Trammell's eyes brimmed with tears as Jesse squeezed his hand. Protecting himself, Trammell in a notarized statement admitted that he saw Jesse "for a day or two after the 1882 funeral and many times after that."

It was Trammell who revealed the James boys had slain the seven Chisholm brothers, suspected of stealing James cattle. "They hung them from a big old oak tree near Guthrie and then shot them through the head," the former Black Cobra undefeated bareknuckle boxer recalled. Jesse corroborated Trammell's story and led reporters to the "hanging tree" in wild brush country about 16 miles outside Guthrie. Then the emerged outlaw revealed that he and The Organization had robbed a Huntington, West Virginia, bank of \$20,000 on September 6, 1875, which even the people of Huntington.

Standing in the crowd watching the Guthrie parade on July 7, 1948, was another oldtimer not yet ready to reveal himself. He was Col. James R. Davis of Nashville, Tenn., in reality the deadly Cole Younger, consigned to his grave many years before by historians. Also at the parade was Robert E. Lee, the young bodyguard for Buffalo Bill Cody, who had overheard his boss' conversation with Jesse at Chicago in 1893. In a sworn statement, Lee said, "As soon as I walked into his room here in Lawton he seemed to remember me by some peculiarity, possibly my voice, or the few words I spoke to him." Lee said he recognized James by certain scars and the contour of his face and head. "He was also the same height as the original Jesse James was to me. Then, too, r noticed the rope burn on his neck."

Following his emergence in Oklahoma, old Jesse, accompanied by a registered nurse and his grandson, Jesse James III, made a nationwide tour. Everywhere he went, he was greeted by an enthusiastic press and hundreds of oldtimers, many of whom had known all along that Jesse James "wasn't really dead."

It was only natural that old Jesse would want to visit California, where he had been very active during his secret years in Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo, San Jose, Grass Valley, Porterville, Long Beach, Los Angeles and Kettleman Hills.

While visiting San Francisco over July 4, 1948, Jesse James III alleges, "The Bigelow family called me and said to keep the old warrior to hell out of Los Angeles County or Grandpa would be shot. Grandpa was pretty upset about this. Through the years Jesse E. James Jr. (Johnny Bigelow, the son of Charlie Bigelow) had tapped him for loans he'd never paid back. And with the exception of Charlie, Bert and John, the Bigelows were a fine family. Grandpa had given employment to Charlie's relatives through the years."

When Jesse W. James and his entourage moved into his Van Nuys home the old man sent word he'd appreciate a visit from Johnny Bigelow, but "Jesse E. James Jr." was reported to be ill in a Long Beach sanatorium and his family refused to allow Jesse to visit him.

The emerged outlaw did see Stella Bigelow, "Mrs. Jesse E. James Jr." but she denied she knew him. Jesse III re calls, "But Stella's daughter, Josie, was another matter. On December 19, 1948, she visited our Van Nuys home and pretended to be the wife of a great memory expert.

"This so-called expert was a joke. He asked a lot of questions which Josie or Stella had apparently written down for him. Grandpa was very patient with Josie and her memory

expert husband, but the Los Angeles press wasn't taken in by the flimsy attempt and the newsmen quit the couple cold."

Even while staying at the Parkway Hotel in Chicago in August, 1948, oldtimers continued to pour forth to identify the white-haired, white-bearded old warrior as the real Jesse James. A cousin, Denzil (Dan) Teza, who was still alive in 1972 at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, recalls his visit with his notorious cousin in Chicago: "Although Jesse had a broken hip, he was really mentally keen. He told me, 'Shucks, Dan, I changed my name about as often as I changed shirts in the past 66 years. Nobody in those days was rash or brave enough to ask questions of any other human being they met. They backed off asking personal questions. To ask questions was to be ill-mannered and a damn good way to commit suicide, if you did ask!' I remember Jesse crying when I left to return to Iowa, and he promised to visit me no later than the spring of 1949, but he never got that far. Through the years, I had often had visits with cousin Jesse and he used a variety of names."

It seemed the old Kentucky-born outlaw, now turned respectable as he lived on borrowed time, never grew tired shaking the hands of oldtimers he had known through the misty decades. Jesse III marvelled at the number of oldstars, some of them former bandits, still alive in 1948.

But the old man, who once headed The Knights of the Golden Circle, top Confederate underground organization and one of the most efficient the world has ever known, was worried because he had lost track of his first cousin, Jesse R. (Dingus) James, born September 5, 1847, in Clay County, Missouri. Jesse Woodson James knew Dingus was alive, but he didn't know where.

Finally, a relative supplied the information that Dingus, 101, was living in Cottage Hill, Florida, under his old alias, Joseph L. Hines, and had never "emerged," apparently desirous of carrying the James secrets to his grave. The relative also reported that Dingus was "gun shy" and professed to have "treasure buried in his back yard."

After a stop in Atlanta, Georgia, where he was visited by members of the Dalton clan (Jesse's mother was Mollie Dalton), old Jesse was anxious to travel on to Pensacola, Florida, for a visit with his cousin. When he arrived at the San Carlos Hotel Jesse sent word to him, but waited two days without Dingus appearing. One morning, "The Hawk" (Jesse James III) looked out the window and saw an old white haired man seated against the wall, wearing dark glasses and his hat off. Some people dropped coins in his hat as they passed by.

"I'd seen him sitting there the day before - but now I suddenly realized it was cousin Dingus," James III recalls, "so I got two silver dollars, walked by the old man and said, 'Turkey Tracks', and tossed a dollar in his hat. I walked a few steps, came back and dropped another dollar in his hat and asked, 'Seen a turtle go by, my friend?'"

Old Dingus looked up and squinted. "Nope, I ain't seen a turtle, but I know you're from

The Organization - where's Jesse?" But Dingus refused to accompany Jesse III into the hotel. He came to the room after dark, using the service elevator. The two old cousin staged a tearful reunion and talked until dawn.

On October 26, 1948, Jesse III asked Dingus for a notarized statement, but the old man pleaded he had a bad heart. When his cousin told him its contents would not be revealed until after his death, Dingus relented. Here in part is the statement by Dingus James, alias Joseph L. Hines:

"We rode together all over the Southwest, South and Western country after the Civil War for nearly 20 years. Cole Younger, Frank James and Clell Miller and many more were with Jesse James in those days, doing everything from driving cattle up the trail from Texas to Kansas and Nebraska. I was with the James boys in the Indian Territory, Texas and Arkansas.

"I am past 90 years and then some myself (he was 101) and have resided in Florida the last few years. I am not in too good health right now but I certainly know all about Jesse James and how he put over the biggest deal of all up in Missouri in April, 1882, when he got away and made it look like the death of Charlie Bigelow was his own death... I have known that if Jesse did not die within the last 20 years he still was around somewhere in Texas or Oklahoma.

"From my own knowledge I know that the man who was known generally for many years as Frank Dalton is in truth the real Jesse James, the outlaw leader. He is the real Jesse James all right. I would know him and any of the boys anywhere. Jesse was quick when need be and could figure out things way ahead of the rest of the boys. He was so quick that some of the boys used to say that Jesse James was a mind reader - always two jumps ahead of everyone else."

Old Jesse Woodson James received several excellent identity boosts before he died August 15, 1951, in Granbury, Texas. In April, 1950, George McGrath, special investigator for the Police Gazette, wrote "Authentic Story of the Real Jesse James" and presented "conclusive evidence that the famous Western outlaw was never killed." In August, 1950, the Police Gazette carried another story by McGrath titled, "More Proof - Murder of Jesse James a Hoax!" He termed Jesse's emergence the "most fantastic story of our generation."

Jesse James III and other descendants never ceased taking affidavits. Jesse III said, "The oldtimers were dropping like flies, the sands of time were running out. We had to act fast or death would seal their lips forever. As it was, many of the oldsters died before we could get to them with a notary public."

One of the most interesting statements was submitted by Mrs. Flora Diamond, the daughter of Gentleman Jim Corbett, heavyweight champion of the world from 1892-1897 under the Marquis of Queensberry rules. Jesse James was Corbett's first cousin, being related through the Dalton family of Georgia. On February 5, 1960, in Galveston, Texas,

Flora Diamond dictated her affidavit. A part of it follows:

"Jesse James, then using the alias of Jesse Wilson, financed my father, James J. Corbett, while he trained for fights. I can say with pride and a feeling of happiness that I count it one of the greatest thrills of my whole life to have been able to grow up and see Jesse James many time... I last saw him on March 24, 1951, and he knew me on sight, calling me Flora Corbett."

Frank R. Freeman in a sworn statement in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on June 9, 1960, recalled:

"Jesse and Frank James had friends all over Louisiana. They helped out a lot of poor Negroes and white folks. Nobody was afraid of the Jameses because they were so good and nice to poor folks...once in Minden, Louisiana, a detective learned who Jesse was and tried to get him drunk so he could shoot him...he gave Jesse two tall glasses of whisky, but Jesse slyly poured the whisky down his shirt. The detective thought Jesse was getting drunk and was silly enough to pull out his gun in an attempt to 'take' Jesse, but Jesse up and shot and killed the man on the spot in the saloon...I knew Jesse James for around 70 years...an old blacksmith in Delhi, Louisiana, told me that Jesse had him shoe his horse backward so when Jesse was riding out of town it would look like he was riding in...I also know his grandson, Jesse James III, who to my notion is just like old Jesse was in my day."

Another Colorado Springs Negro, John Gibson, recalls Jesse from his days in Fayette County, Arkansas:

"Not too many folks ever knew that Frank and Jesse James would come and go, move about amongst the Negro people, who saw to it that nobody sneaked up on them...they keep their mouths shut and their eyes open...they were fine white men, helped out many poor folks all around us and were the best friends we colored folks ever had. They will be loved and well-thought of as long as the world stands. They helped my father out. I don't know how much money they gave my daddy and mammy - they helped pay off our debts and the mortgage on our farm. Old Jesse had thoroughbred , standard-bred, Steeldust - racehorses by the dozens down in Arkansas. He also was a silent partner in many oldtime livery stables, horse ranches and farms...the last time I recall ever seeing old Jesse Woodson James was when he owned the Happy Hollow Shooting Gallery in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and his grandson, Jesse James III, was with him."

William D. Blalock, on February 5, 1960, in Ft. Bolivar, Texas, recalled that Jesse James used the alias, Frank James, when he visited Sullivan County, Tennessee:

"Down in Texas," Blalock recalled, "I told old Jesse I was William Blalock from Sullivan County Tennessee. Old Jesse...stared into space for a few moments, then said, 'I know you, fellow, but your name ain't really Blalock, as I recall it now.' This was a fact and old Jesse knew this family secret."

More corroboration of identity came from Henry Ross, who stated on January 9, 1960:

"My father went to school with the Missouri Jesse and Frank James and he also knew the Kentucky doctor whose name was Dr. Sylvester Franklin James and his brother, Jesse Woodson James. All my aunts and uncles knew these James families well...long after Jesse Woodson James was presumed to be dead he came to visit my father almost every summer in old Colorado City, Colorado...I didn't get to see him when he was out here the last time in 1948."

Dr. William B. Harvey, who on March 28, 1960, was 84 and residing at 810 Russell Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee, recalled:

"Jesse James, using the name, 'Colonel McClarey', when he was 48 taught Sunday School at the Methodist Church in East Nashville in 1892...he stayed at Fourth and Woodland streets and also lived in the old house where the old Dixie Tabernacle on Fatherland Street stood...for a time, off and on, old Jesse bearded with an elderly lady at 711 Fatherland Street and I have an idea that his aged mother lived at the same address some years ago. I personally talked with Jesse Woodson James for hours on many occasions...we knew Bob Ford never did shoot Jesse James! Old Jesse used to laugh and tell us how he actually attended his own funeral and heard his own sermon preached down in Missouri in 1882. It was real comical and funny the way he told it on himself at times...when Jesse and I attended the same Methodist Church he most always carried his walking stick - which was really a sword for his own protection...and he had a six shooter stuck down in each boot top...Yes, I most certainly knew and had every reason to know the famous Jesse Woodson James. He was a friend of mine and my family and others about us."

In the past few years, the "real story" about Jesse James has crept into Western-type magazines. In the January, 1967, REAL WEST, Dr. W. D. Chesney wrote, "Who Lies Buried in Jesse James' Grave?" Dr. Chesney claims he knew Frank and Jesse James, Wyatt Earp, Calamity Jane, Bat Masterson, Al Jennings and other famous or notorious Western characters. He said, "Al Jennings used to tell me, 'I don't give a damn what is said, I know that the real Jesse James still lives in Texas.' "

Dr. Chesney reports his father-in-law, Dr. J. S. Preston, of Howard County, Missouri, once examined Jesse James' eyes for conjunctivitis. After perusing the photo of the St. Joseph corpse, Dr. Preston snorted, "If that is Jesse James, I am the Queen of May!"

In his article, Dr. Chesney of Janesville, Wisconsin, relates that in about 1904 he was staying at the Alexander Hotel in Bushnell, Illinois. He contacted Frank James and asked, "Frank, why weren't you called in to identify the body of the man who was supposed to be your brother, Jesse?" He reported that Frank snarled, "Dec, you're in dangerous territory. Better mind your own damned business and maybe save your own hide!"

In 1910, Dr. Chesney reports he asked Dunt Ford, an Excelsior Springs, Missouri, druggist and politician, "Dunt, is Jesse James really buried in Kearney, Missouri?" Ford

replied, "God only knows, not I. There are many who knew Jesse James who believe he is still living some place in Texas. Mysterious letters addressed in a printed scrawl come to Frank James, and they are from some town in Texas."

Perhaps the whole clincher as to whether or not J. Frank Dalton was "the real Jesse James" when he emerged in 1948 was supplied by George McGrath when he wrote in the August, 1950, issue of the Police Gazette:

"Judge Ransom E. Breuer ruled in Missouri Probate Court that he had no power to give back his name because old Jesse never had legally changed his name to 'J. Frank Dalton'. If the evidence had been against him, the court certainly would have ruled that he could not use the name Jesse James." McGrath closed his well-done article thusly:

"And old Jesse, rapidly running out of seconds, flashed fire from those blue eagle eyes and demanded: 'With one foot in the grave and the other one on the brink, do you think I would lie as to who I am?'"

Chapter 4

The James Boys Go to War

"If nobody will fire this thing at the damn yankees, I will!"

With that, Captain George James pulled the lanyard and the cannon's roar shattered the predawn calm at precisely 4:30 a.m., April 12, 1861. The Secessionists had fired on Ft. Sumter, S.C., and the War Between the States had officially begun. Within the fort, a Union officer named Abner Doubleday, who had invented the game of baseball while a West Point cadet in 1839, pulled a lanyard, firing the first shot of the war for the North.

Who was Captain James? He was a wealthy Kentucky plantation owner who also had land in Tennessee and Louisiana. A descendant of the founders of Jamestown, Captain James had married Miss Mollie Dalton, whose ancestors had owned much of the northern half of Georgia. After South Carolina seceded from the Union on Dec. 20, 1860, Captain James met with Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders. He was offered and accepted a commission in the Rebel army.

Following the holidays, Captain James called his family together and said, "We'll make short work of the Yankees if they start anything. We should all be home by next Christmas." Listening were his sons, including 16-year-old Jesse Woodson James and an older brother, Sylvester Franklin James.

"How soon can I get into uniform?" young Jesse asked his brother Frank.

"As soon as you get dry behind the ears," was the reply. The Union's Ft. Sumter, facing starvation, struck its colors two days after the first salve of the war and at least five of Captain James' sons rushed to join the Confederate Army.

At this point, most historians get gummed up in their own complacency or lack of research. They have Captain George James' and Mollie Dalton's Jesse Woodson James and Sylvester Franklin James both fighting under Quantrill's Black Flag. Actually, it was Captain James' nephews, Alexander Franklin James and Jesse Robert (Dingus) James who fought with Quantrill. Dingus joined Quantrill at the tender age of 15 after his cousin, Jesse Ballard James, was hung by the Yankees at Dora, Missouri. Dingus participated in Quantrill's bloody raid on Lawrence, Kansas, in August, 1863.

Historians are guilty of another gross error. They not only list Frank and Jesse James as the sons of the Rev. Robert James and Zerelda Cole, but they kill off Rev. James in the California goldfields. Actually, Rev. James, Captain George James' brother, changed his name to Jim Reed, remarried and died while bravely fighting for the Stars and Bars.

Jesse Woodson James was only 16 when he joined Colonel Dean's cavalry unit at

Manchester, Kentucky. Because Kentucky was a border state, young James was sent to Tennessee for his training. The youngster was still in boot camp when he noticed he 'was suffering from blurred vision.

Although a crack shot since he was 7 or 8, Jesse now was having trouble locating the target. His company commander sent Jesse to the medical tent where a kindly old Southern doctor asked, "What's the matter with you, son?"

"I just don't know, Major, sir, but my eyes are fogging up."

The doctor reached for a bottle and pressed some pills in his hand. "Sounds like your liver is upset. Take three of these a day."

Jesse was back the second day. "Looka here, Major, sir, the pills ain't helping none. I think I got the blind staggers, sir."

This time the doctor examined the young Kentuckian's eyes carefully and then gravely shook his head. "It jus' can't be, son, but you got cataracts. I'm afraid your sojering days are over."

Fellow cavalrymen gave Jesse a rousing sendoff, but as he rode home toward the plantation near Frankfort he tested his eyes on fence posts. Once he yelled, "My God, I'm going stone blind!" and spurred his horse into a wild gallop.

His mother met him at the door, a worried look on her face. "What's the matter, son?"

"Nothing at all, Ma'am, just goin' blind, that's all." So Jesse sat at home, discouraged, moping and living in a shell. Letters arrived from his father and his brothers, but Jesse listlessly tossed them aside. The war would have to go on without him. The bright promise of spring seemed to turn into a dank, dark December.

Then Dr. Frank James came home on a short leave and Jesse hesitantly told him his tale of woe.

"Well, cheer up, son, you ain't dead yet. Over in Nashville our army is studying new medical theories, but I don't even know if there's anything dealing with cataracts. I kind of doubt it. So we're going to try an old, old method. Sometimes it helps and sometimes it doesn't. And it'll hurt like hell, son, but we don't have much time."

Dr. Frank ordered the James slaves to butcher a beef. "Go ahead and dress it out, Sam," he told the strawboss, "but I want you to cut out the pancreas and bring it to me in this pan. Bring the pancreas to me while it's still warm."

In the kitchen, Frank extracted some fluid from the steer's pancreas and carefully poured it into a bottle with a few drops of light oil. He walked into Jesse's bedroom shaking the small bottle, followed by two husky slaves.

Jesse peered at his brother. "What's coming off, Frank?"

"You just relax. I warned you this is going to smart. In fact, it might burn like hell. The boys are here to see you don't rub your eyes."

Sitting on the bed beside his patient, Dr. Frank took a fresh goose quill, dipped it into the bottle and then put a drop in each of Jesse's eyes.

"Oh, God, Oh God, you're blindin' me!" Jesse screamed as the slaves grabbed his arms.

"I know it hurts, but you can't rub your eyes until these hot drops stop burning. You can't even touch your eyes for twenty-four hours, and we're here to see that you don't," Frank replied, nodding to the slaves.

At middle age, Jesse by then a hunted, notorious outlaw, looked back to that spring day in 1861. "If ever a mere lad of barely 17 endured the tortures of burning hell and torment, I did. To make sure I didn't mess with my eyes, Frank sat with me all night and all next day.

"The next afternoon all soreness was gone and my eyeballs were no longer on fire, but for the next four or five days I wore that damn blind and sometimes I wondered if I'd ever see the sun again. After what seemed like ages, brother Frank called in another doctor and together they examined my eyes and pronounced the treatment a success. The blind was removed and I could see clearly once more!"

"Frank gathered up his medical kit, shook my hand and said, 'Adios, amigo, now you rest about a week and I think Colonel Dean'll take you back into the army. I have to get back to camp. Now you take care of yourself, you hear?'"

The word spread that Dr. Frank had cured his cataracts and a week later Colonel Dean sent a courier to the plantation appointing Jesse an acting corporal and asking him to escort a group of raw recruits from the Louisville- Frankfort area to Manchester, Kentucky.

Following basic training at Manchester, Jesse and the other Confederate soldiers were sent to a camp along Richland Creek on the outskirts of Nashville. The company commander warned his men every morning that deserters would be shot if caught. There were few deserters, but many became sick and some were homesick and shed tears at night.

Malaria and hookworm were rampant and soldiers were issued a small sack of quinine which was drunk with coffee. Each soldier was issued his individual rations and expected to do his own cooking. At first, most of the recruits had brought along their Negro slaves or body servants, which created many confusing incidents.

In addition to their servants, some of the young soldiers had brought along their hounds, which created more problems for the officers. Jesse recalled, "After a time, we woke up to the fact that a fighting army or a horse-fighting cavalry had to limit its weight and gear. With the hounds trailing us and the Negro slaves trying to run to keep up we were a hell of a funny-looking fighting force. So we taught the Negro slaves to shoot and to fight when the need arose and we let the damn hounds shift for themselves.

"At first we farm and plantation-bred lads presumed we'd hate the Yankees licked in six months. All of us thought we were going out on a big, glamorous picnic. As boys we had learned to shoot the famous long-barrelled Kentucky squirrel rifles so we had brought them along. Then we learned they were going to be taken away from us and replaced with a muzzle-loader of doubtful accuracy but with a detachable bayonet so we gave our personal rifles to our body servants, who were delighted.

"After going through four or five heavy rainstorms with mud, chilly nights, soaked beds, wet blankets and wet blue uniforms we began to get serious. Yes, the first uniforms issued us were of Union blue, not Confederate gray!"

The Southern men had brought their own horses from home. Some were finely-bred saddle horses while some of the poorer soldiers had horses of dubious cavalry calibre. The latter horses and men were soon transferred to artillery or infantry units.

"Then one day," Jesse recalled, "the blue rags we were wearing were gathered up and we were issued sort of a tannish-gray outfit. The women folk across the South had been sewing thousands of gray uniforms by hand. It didn't matter much whether they fit perfectly or not - at least we didn't look like damn yankees in our new uniforms."

While moving toward the North one of the hounds became rabid, bit several horses and three soldiers before somebody had presence of mind to shoot the animal with a foaming mouth. Nothing could be done for the three soldiers and they died horrible deaths.

"Later on," Jesse recalled, "when we became involved in skirmishes we had plenty of sick and wounded boys to help, but many died of infection, neglect or lack of medicines. By this time, we began to wake up the fact that war was no picnic. It was more like hell."

How did the Confederates manage to hold out four years against the Union, whose forces outnumbered them almost seven to one? The South had a better spy network and many historians believe they had better generals. And Southern soldiers were more daring, although both sides were gifted with brave fighters. During four years of fighting, Jesse got to know many of the Confederate generals on a first-name basis, including Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, J. E. B. Stuart and J. O. Shelby. He admired Stuart's daring, calling him "my type of general," but his sentimental favorite was the Missouri Shelby, "whom God gifted with a lot of guts."

The Confederacy had many proficient spies in addition to the notorious John Wilkes Booth, the man who ultimately killed President Lincoln. One of the best known women

spies was Myra Belie Shirley, the daughter of a Missouri judge, John Shirley. Because she went under the alias of Belie Starr, historians have often confused her with another Belie Starr, the murderous woman outlaw.

Missouri Frank and Jesse James had gone to a private school with Myra Belie Shirley. During a battle in southern Missouri, Jesse had been shot in the knee. Suffering great pain and loss of blood, the young soldier crawled into the brush like a wounded animal. When the Union soldiers had passed, he struggled to a nearby creek where Myra Belie found him unconscious. She had him carried to her father's house and summoned a doctor. The doctor wanted to amputate his leg, but Jesse objected, saying, "Show me a man with a crippled body and I'll show you a man with a crippled mind."

Myra Belie took over the nursing chores, changing the dressing twice a day and applied what medicine was available. Union spies learned that a Confederate officer was recuperating in Shirley's upstairs bedroom and before Jesse's wound was completely healed, Myra Belie spotted Union troopers approaching. Warning Jesse, she ran out, saddled two horses, and the couple escaped under a hail of Union bullets.

Shortly after helping Jesse escape, Myra Belie and her friend Nellie Chambers were raped by Union soldiers. When word of this reached Jesse, he and Cole Younger (who was married to Jesse's sister, Rebecca) dressed as farm boys and rode to the courthouse. "By combining the best sniping methods with our knowledge of guerrilla warfare we picked off quite a few of the damn yankees and then had the satisfaction of killing several of the raping bastards, including a major, at close range." The raid by the unknown "farm boys" caused a military investigation and the rape of the Shirley and Chambers girls became known. A couple of dozen Union troopers were court martialed, some were shot and others imprisoned.

While Jesse had been trained as a cavalrymen, the Confederate Command soon recognized his ability to execute hit-and-run manoeuvres. At 18 he was elected first captain by his troop and rose to full colonel before he was captured while badly wounded near the end of the war.

"I trained my troops along the methods employed by General J. E. B. Stuart. We combined mobility with daring and fire power. Instead of blundering into a Union ambush, we'd send scouts ahead to pick off their snipers and small patrols to stage diversionary actions. Once we got the Yankees off balance we'd hit 'em like a ton of bricks, lightning fast. Then we'd pull back, regroup and hit 'em from another angle. At times, I felt sorry for those bewildered devils, but we had a job to do and we were getting it done."

With vital supplies running low both on the military and civilian fronts as a result of the Union blockade, Jesse was turned loose to raid Union supply wagons, boats and trains during the final two years of the war.

"It's easier to tell you what we didn't need, than what we did need, which was

everything," he recalled. "We'd go behind the Yankee lines, capture and bury Union payrolls, figuring unpaid soldiers would become demoralized. And we'd grab and run with medicines, blankets, guns, ammunition, quinine, needles, thread, even paper, and horse shoes, nails, tools, salt, sugar, hams, bacon, side meats of all kinds, flour and vinegar. Our contributions were gratefully received by the Southerners and one general jokingly told me I ought to be placed in charge of the Confederate Quartermaster Corps.

"To prepare for our new roles, we ditched our regular army uniforms and dressed as inconspicuous as possible. I turned each of my men into a one-man army. Each was outfitted with a gun harness which could hold six .36 calibre pistols. We each carried extra loaded cylinders, which could be switched in seconds with empty ones.

"The Confederate Command kept 'borrowing' my men because big battles were still being fought. My mother, Mollie Dalton James, had Cherokee blood in her veins and I seemed to get along well with Indians. As my ranks were depleted by Rebel generals, I began enlisting Indians. First, I added a band of Choctaws from what is now Oklahoma.

Then I enlisted some Sacs, their natural enemy. A few years before the Choctaws and Sacs had been shooting each other, but they became united under my command. My brother, Frank, and I leaned languages easily so I was soon talking to them in their own tongues.

"Actually, I learned more from the old warriors in their tribes than they learned from me. They taught my Indian charges how to infiltrate, dodge and then attack from the least expected quarters. We learned not to attack a moving Union supply train. We got better results, with less fuss, by waiting until the wagons stopped to feed and water their horses and the men were cooking their noonday meal. Then we hit 'em with everything we had, slaughtered or crippled their soldiers and grabbed their supplies.

"Being from Kentucky, I had no difficulty passing as a Yankee soldier or officer. At times I would put on a Union uniform and mingle with enemy officers. If I had been caught, I would have been shot on the spot. But it was a crazy, daredevil business and I thoroughly enjoyed it. While dressed as a Union officer, I'd pass along false information - those damn yankees would believe anything - and lead them right into our trap.

"At one time in the Louisiana-Arkansas area I had more than 500 Indians in my command and only a handful of white officers. Indian military geniuses like Crazyhorse and Chief Joseph were yet to develop, but all these so-called savages needed was direction. My Indians had guts, cunning and skill and they could have very easily been the best fighters on either side in the War Between the States.

"We developed a very effective strategy for dealing with Union supply wagons, which were generally driven by civilian teamsters but protected by an increasingly heavier guard. I'd split up my Indians into four groups. One group would rush out of the forest attacking the enemy right flank. Seconds later, the second group would ride like demons toward the left flank. Just when the Union officers thought the worst was over my two

reserve groups would burst forth and finish them off. The only danger was being hit by our own crossfire, but this seldom happened. We tried not to shoot the Union teamsters' horses. This way, my Indians would jump into the seat and drive the wagons right into the forest where regular Confederate troops were waiting to take over the spoils.

"We waylaid supply-laden wagon trains by the dozens. We hit river boats, sometimes capturing them and carrying off supplies before scuttling them. On rare occasions the Yankees would get a stretch of railroad into operation. On a dark night we'd derail the engine, loot the cars and then set fire to the rolling stock. My five-hundred Indians probably did more damage to the Union war effort than ten thousand conventional troops could have done."

During the final year of the Civil War, he discovered several young medicine men in his command. From them he learned which herbs and roots would cure a fever or hold a snakebite in check until danger passed. He was taught the value of hot and cold compresses in treating a water moccasin's bite. With malaria running rampant and quinine in short supply, Jesse passed along the medicine men's knowledge to regular Confederate Army doctors.

By the time Jesse W. James was 20, he had been elected a full colonel and the War Between the States looked like "The Lost Cause." With patriotic fervor and reckless abandon, the Kentucky daredevil had stolen millions of dollars in Yankee gold and, for the most part, buried it.

Colonel James staged his greatest coup during the final days of the war. Confederate spies learned that a big Yankee payroll of about \$14 million in gold was coming down the Mississippi River to pay soldiers serving under Generals Grant and Sherman for a two-month period. The plan called for the giant paychest to be taken off the Union sidewheeler in Louisiana bayou country near Oak Grove.

The boat pulled into the landing right on schedule, but the paychest would be taken overland to a landing on another bayou in order to "confuse the guerrillas which infested the area." The heavy chest was rolled off the boat, onto the landing and into a Union ambulance which was pulled by six horses.

Posing as poor fishermen, Jesse and his Indian guerrillas were busy hauling in catfish when the heavy ambulance arrived at the second landing. They had been apprised of the entourage's progress by signals sent by a ringing schoolhouse bell. Twenty burly Union soldiers pushed the paychest along on rollers to the center of the deck on the second river boat. Then it was lashed down by rope.

Jesse looked up at the sun and smiled. The timing was perfect. The Union soldiers would be breaking for lunch and his Indians had plenty of catfish for sale. Jesse recalled, "I always had a theory about when to hit an enemy who was cooking a meal. Fighting takes concentration. If you hit too soon, the enemy will grab his rifle and forget about the food, but once he starts smelling the cooking food, his thoughts are on his stomach and far

away from fighting. That's the psychological time to hit - right then!"

Jesse and his twelve unarmed "fishermen" continued to hook catfish, but he waited for the aroma of frying fish to catch his nostrils. Then he calmly stood up, took off his shirt and started to shake it, like he was getting rid of bugs. This was the signal and a group of Jesse's men down the bayou began firing at the assembled soldiers. Almost reluctantly, the Yankees picked up their arms and began to return the fire. Then Jesse's men up the bayou began firing. Caught in a crossfire, the major in charge ordered the soldiers to split into two groups and race toward their attackers, leaving three portly sergeants to guard the paychest.

On signal, three Indians approached the gangplank and called out "food, food," while Jesse and the other nine Indians swam around the far side of the craft and pulled themselves aboard.

A florid-faced sergeant barked, "Git outa here, ya dirty redskins afore I blast you into the Happy Hunting Grounds!"

That was the Union noncom's last words on earth. Jesse's razor-sharp knife severed his windpipe, and he fell to the deck. Jesse's Indian cohorts had plunged knives into the backs of the two other sergeants.

Jabbering in Choctaw, Jesse and his raiders grabbed pry bars and trundled the heavy paychest to the far side of the boat. Then it splashed into the muddy waters of the bayou and quickly settled into the muck at the bottom. When Jesse and his men leaped from the boat into the water, it was a signal for his two groups engaging the Yankees to fade away into the undergrowth.

Jesse's men had reached the safety of the far bayou shore and watched with glee. The Union major up the bayou couldn't believe his enemy had disappeared and thought he was being attacked from the rear. He ordered his men to do an about-face and continue firing. The group down the bayou fired back. As a consequence the Union suffered at least a dozen casualties.

"You should have seen the look on the major's face when he got back to the boat," Jesse recalled, "because it was worth the price of admission. His three sergeants lay dead on the deck and the paychest had disappeared. Now, any damn fool could have figured out what happened to the chest, but the major, who had probably bought his commission, went wild. He ordered his troopers to mount and we heard him shout, "Block all the roads! Stop them! My God, there's \$14 million in that paychest!"

The major and his men were still chasing phantoms two hours later when three Union Army engineers rode up to the landing and sat on their horses scratching their heads. Now even the boat had disappeared. They had no way of knowing that when the major and his troopers left the boat unguarded, Jesse, this time accompanied by a hundred Indians, returned and stripped the craft of all valuables, towed it away and then sank it

with a gunpowder bomb.

Next afternoon a full troop of soldiers stood guard while engineers plumbed the bottom. They located the chest in about thirty feet of water, but cranes and other equipment were not available so the loss was written off and no doubt forgotten forever by the War Department. Although the war was winding down, several hundred Union troops, angered by not getting paid, deserted. The major was court-martialled and sentenced to five years in prison - all because he had been outwitted by some bayou fishermen. And redskins at that!

Before he died at 107, Jesse said, "At the end of World War II when Col. Jefferson Davis, grandson of the Confederate President, retired from the service, he went over the statistics on the Bayou Treasure with me. We considered the number of Union soldiers involved in General Grant's and General Sherman's operations at the time, the table of organization, the pay of various grades and ranks and he agreed with me that \$14 million lies at the bottom of the Louisiana bayou"

I've been to the very spot at least six times in my life - the last three times with my grandson, Jesse James III - and it's still lying there. All the landmarks are etched in my mind. But why go to the bother of bringing it up? The federal government would probably confiscate it anyway."

Colonel James' glee over dumping of the Union paychest into the bayou was the last time he laughed during the Civil War. General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, but small pockets of resistance continued in the South. A diehard Confederate, Colonel James vowed to fight on, but was wounded and imprisoned in Columbus, Mississippi.

The Columbus, Mississippi, prison was overflowing with Confederate soldiers and doctors barely looked at his wounds. "I don't know what the Confederate prison at Andersonville was like, but I heard it was pretty bad. I don't know how it could be any worse than the one the Yankees stuck me in.

"Instead of giving me medical treatment or letting me lie and recuperate, they got me up at all hours of the day and night and interrogated me. I told them nothing, not even my name. To hell with 'em!

"So I was never sure whether they knew I was Colonel Jesse James or not. But they heard my Indian soldier call me 'colonel' so they knew they hadn't captured a buck private. When I kept mum, they decided to torture me to make me talk. They put a noose around my neck, not enough to kill me, but to scare me. The burns I got from that rope will be with me to my dying day.

"They tried beating me half a dozen times a day. They were sure I had some secrets they should know. Needless to say, my wounds didn't heal too fast. Every night they'd threaten to shoot me the next morning, but tomorrow never came. Finally, I guess my will was

stronger than their will. I was set free the latter part of June."

Stumbling past the gates and out into the sunshine, Jesse never in his life had felt so much alone. Then he heard a low whistle and recognized the boy selling cookies outside the gates as one of his former Indian soldiers. Everyone had called him "Chief" because his father was a real chief.

"Chief" had information for Jesse, and more important, he had about five-hundred dollars and a horse and buggy hidden away. One of Jesse's white officers had surrendered to a Yankee colonel from Frankfort, Kentucky, who told him 'that Jesse Woodson James had officially been outlawed by Washington because he did his war-time "stealing" out of uniform. The officer passed this information on to "Chief." The Indian managed to follow the prison van containing Jesse all the way to Vicksburg. Hanging around the back door of a bordello he cold cocked two tipsy Union colonels. The haul was worth more than \$500. He repeated the process in Jackson. This time it was two Union majors. The take was about \$300.

"Chief" then stole a horse about ten miles from the prison where Jesse was kept. He neglected at first to say he caught a Union corporal jogging along a country road and had to shoot him before he stole the mount. Knowing that Jesse was wounded, he bought two wrecked buggies and came out with one whole one - just in case Jesse was in no shape to ride. He also bought a second-hand suit of "white man's clothes."

In a half an hour "Chief" had returned with his horse and buggy, fairly bursting with pride. "We go anywhere, Colonel," the Indian declared. Jesse pondered. "Where is anywhere?" he asked himself. If he was outlawed, the Kentucky plantation was the last place to go. He put his arm around the Indian and squeezed him. "Chief" slipped him a .36 calibre pistol. "I got two," he said.

As they climbed into the buggy, Jesse said, "Chief, God willing we'll go to Carthage, Missouri. To old Judge John Shirley's house where Myra Belie will nurse me back to health. She's done it before and she'll probably do it again."

The long journey was taken in easy stages. Jesse tired easily and there were numerous Union roadblocks.

The usual Yankee question: "Hey, there, Reb, whatcha doin' with that fancy horse and the Injun?"

Having been over the route many times as a Confederate regular and guerrilla, Jesse always answered he was en route to his home which was always a little town about five miles to the north. As to his ownership of the horse, carriage and Indian, Jesse managed to smile and wink: "Won 'em in a crap game!" The soldiers winked back and let the rig pass.

After what seemed an eternity, they arrived at Judge Shirley's house, Myra Belie put him

to bed and he slept for two days. When he awakened, she and "Chief" were seated by the bed.

By the time he had recuperated, both Jesse and Myra Belie knew they were in love. Judge Shirley promised to marry them, but Jesse would only let him get involved "if it's out of this county." Carthage is close to both Arkansas and Kansas. One morning at dawn the three of them got into the Judge's buggy and left town. They returned the following night.

Jesse James III muses, "Knowing Grandpa's fetishes for aliases, I can only assume he used an assumed name when he married Myra Belie. It was probably Dick Reed - an outlawed man would hardly use the name he was wanted as."

Myra Belie was Jesse W. James' first and only true love. It would be nice to say they lived happily ever after, but this was not the case. For Jesse, the sounds of war had quieted, but another battle was just beginning, a relentless odyssey that would take him across prairies, the mountains, the deserts, rivers and oceans for 86 long and eventful years.

Chapter 5

The Treasure of Emperor Maximilian

Historians like to wrap up their efforts into neat little packages, expecting their product to last until the end of time. For instance, history books report the Civil War or War Between the States began with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, S.C., Friday, April 12, 1861, and concluded with Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender to Union Gen. U.S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on Sunday, April 9, 1865.

Quoting statistics, the history books report the Civil War cost the Confederate States of America \$2 billion and the Union \$3.5 billion, but with "soldier pensions and other considerations" the total cost of the Civil War approached \$10 billion. Washington is still paying pensions to dependents, although the last Confederate veteran died in 1959.

The statisticians were busy when it came to casualty figures. The Union forces had 2,666,999 men under arms and lost 359,258 in killed and wounded. Meanwhile, the Confederates had only 500,000 men under arms during the four year "official war" and 95,000 were killed and wounded, but "fatal diseases and accidents" put the Rebel casualty figures closer to 200,000.

Col. Jesse W. James, who lived a long time - from April 17, 1844, to August 15, 1951 - knew the Civil War "inside and out." He told his grandchildren, "Historical dates and statistics don't always tell the true story - far from it.

"The war actually began in border areas like Missouri and Kansas long before Fort Sumter. When did it end? Well, I think it ended about in 1916 when we began disbanding The Knights of the Golden Circle, the top Confederate underground organization. And don't forget that Nashville, Tenn., was the Confederate underground capital for 19 years after General Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

"And how can historians get on an adding machine and total up the real cost of the Civil War? Why, the economy of the South was completely shattered by 1865 and the thieving Carpetbaggers were still to come! What about the gold and silver which was hijacked from the Union by Confederate guerrillas? What about the destruction of commerce and industry and normal losses of business in both the North and the South? The cost figure of \$10 billion is only somebody's wild guess - the real economic losses ran into the hundreds of billions!"

History gives a few lines or none at all to the Battle of Anahuac which occurred almost two years after Appomattox in the upper reaches of Galveston Bay, Texas. Colonel James was in this battle in which vastly outnumbered Confederate army and naval forces badly

mauled their Union counterparts. There were other widely scattered and unnamed skirmishes and the bitter Union and Confederate rivalry shifted to the vast West. How many gunfights were the direct result of Civil War sympathies? How much gold and silver was stolen from the Union and buried in Confederate depositories?

While busy with the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was worried about the presence of Napoleon III's French troops in Mexico under Emperor Maximilian. And he had a right to be. Confederate agents had gotten Maximilian's ear with the plea, "We need each other - you help us and we'll help you!"

To set the stage for the recovery of Emperor Maximilian's treasure, one must peek behind the scenes into a labyrinth of Confederate secrets, including a look at Col. Elbert DeWitt Travis. Col. Elbert DeWitt Travis was better known and feared as William Clarke Quantrill, a roving Confederate colonel of the Missouri Confederate Irregulars under General Marmaduke or Gen. J. O. Shelby. In 1865 the Confederates had spread rumors bound to reach Yankee ears that Quantrill was dying in a Union prison hospital in Kentucky. When the man died, the Union and historians wrote finis to the bloody guerrilla leader. Another successful hoax for the Rebels.

But, as we shall see, the wily old fighter was not dead. Old Jesse not many years before he died said, "It is unbelievable the number of Confederate lies the Yankees believed. The most dangerous, hard-hitting plans we concocted were done in utter secrecy. Secrecy is the most effective weapon you can use - if you can just learn to keep your damn big mouth shut!"

As the "official" Civil War drew to a close, Gen. J. O. Shelby and 2,000 Missouri cavalrymen, plus a full regiment of Confederate-led Red Bone Indians from East Texas, had slipped below the Rio Grande River to prop up Emperor Maximilian's tottering Mexican regime. President Lincoln was dead, but Washington was bringing pressure to get the French soldiers and Emperor Maximilian out of Mexico, considering their presence a serious violation of the Monroe Doctrine. General Shelby's men in Mexico were spread out from Vera Cruz on the Gulf of Mexico almost 300 miles straight west to Mexico City. The Red Bone Indian regiment enjoyed good health, but Shelby's troopers were riddled with smallpox, dysentery and malnutrition, to say nothing of homesickness. The Missourians were being sniped at by Benito Juarez' Mexican patriots who were seeking to overthrow Emperor Maximilian. In addition, Maximilian's French troops took occasional potshots at the American invaders.

By 1867 the 35-year-old Mexican Emperor's position had deteriorated and Napoleon III began withdrawing French troops. Empress Charlotta had gone to France and then to Rome to plead her husband's case in July, 1866.

Word reached Colonels Quantrill and Jesse James that the Missourians and Red Bone Indians must be rescued or face sure death. The Knights of the Golden Circle held an emergency secret meeting in Oak Grove, Louisiana, to design a rescue.

Colonel Quantrill gave quite a speech. "I first want men who do not fear death. Second, I want men who have skills to bring out Shelby's troops. I want seasoned rear-guard fighters who will turn the rivers of Mexico into blood if need be. There is no assurance any of us will ever get back across the Rio Grande alive. Some of you may be tortured by Benito Juarez' fanatics. All of us may and probably will suffer the tortures of the damned. I want the best one hundred men the South can muster for this mission."

Jesse, who had made one raid with Quantrill - the one on Lawrence, Kansas - as a young lad, was chosen as joint commander with the guerrilla chief by The Knights of the Golden Circle. Jesse could speak Spanish, French and German:" and his four years fighting the Civil War had been marked by daring and bravery. He helped Quantrill handpick the volunteers. Four doctors who could shoot and were in top physical condition were chosen and 88 of what Quantrill called "the bravest men ever assembled" were selected.

The secret meeting broke up, but James and Quantrill spent a few days briefing their 92 charges along a secret bayou. Southern gunsmiths delivered a thousand Colt, Remington and Smith & Wesson cap-and-ball pistols which had been converted into cartridge-type .45s and .44s. Each man would carry two Henry rifles. Colonel James brought in leather makers to devise harnesses so that each member of the rescue team could carry ten pistols in the U-shaped harness which hung down from neck and shoulders. The best available maps were checked and a route was laid out. Bolstered by Golden Circle money, the best horses and pack animals in that part of the South were obtained. Loaded down with guns and ammunition, Quantrill contemplated living off the land south of the border.

To avoid attracting Yankee attention, the soldiers traveled in smaller groups through Texas and at night sometimes to avoid Union patrols or garrisons. The route took them through Nacogdoches, Crockett, Fort Austin, Guy's Store, right down El Camino Real to San Antonio, past the Alamo into Mexico at Laredo.

Once on Mexican soil the men formed two parties of 46 each with Quantrill and James as commanders. The two parties of experienced guerrillas kept in sight of each other, and tried and tested Confederate signs, passwords, and contact techniques were employed. Although terrorists were busy raiding villages and shooting up the countryside, they were no match for the American guerrillas, who easily avoided contact with them. They made amazingly fast time.

In a small village about half way between Mexico City and Vera Cruz, James, Quantrill and Shelby got together for a strategy meeting. Jesse was to meet with the Emperor. When the two did meet, Maximilian and the 23year-old James became immediate friends, and Jesse was given a full colonel's commission in the European's army. From the start, it was apparent to the Kentuckian that the Emperor's position was untenable. "Abdicate before you're shot, Your Highness, and we'll take you back to Texas with General Shelby's forces," he urged.

Although he'd been in Mexico but four years, Maximilian had acquired a small but loyal

following. If he left, he argued, members of his court would be butchered by Benito Juarez' patriots .

"And then there's the matter of treasure, Herr James," he said.

Colonel James perked up his ears. Treasure? He was convinced that the Second Civil War was certain and the South would need money to finance it.

The Emperor elaborated. He was entrusted with valuable House of Hapsburg jewels and heirlooms, there was his own great wealth, but more important, Aztec Indians knew where a large Aztec treasure cache was located.

Some of the gold and jewels had been hidden by Montetume's loyal servants to keep it out of the greedy Conquistadore's hands, while the rest of it had been stolen by Aztec porters lugging it from Mexico City to Vera Cruz where it would be put on ships bound for Spain. Maximilian could not estimate its value because he had never seen it, but he said, "It is vast, Herr James."

"The treasure, Your Highness, must not be allowed to fall into the hands of Juarez' bloody peons," Jesse said.

"In three or four years, Herr James, I have not been able to help your Confederate cause too much. Your war was almost decided when I was placed on the throne of Mexico. I was able to give some funds to your cause and also sanctuary in some cases. But I'd much rather you Confederates had all the treasure than to have Benito Juarez seize it," Maximilian replied.

While the Southern doctors treated General Shelby's sick troopers and Quantrill was stalling for time so the soldiers could recover their strength for the long trek back to Texas, Jesse took fifty emaciated Missouri cavalrymen to Vera Cruz and managed to retrieve the treasure. Then he returned to the village where Jesse talked one last time with Emperor Maximilian. "We have dug up the Montezuma treasure and Quantrill is buying Mexican mules, not nearly as big or sturdy as those back in Missouri. I'm happy Her Royal Highness took her own jewels with her back to Europe - they'd be only more tote to Texas. We have moved the last of your personal treasure into our mountain hideout. All is in readiness for our departure. I beg of you, Maximilian, put your pride aside and flee with us."

The Emperor sadly shook his head. "I know the situation is hopeless, but I must stay with my court and faithful Indian servants." After a quick handshake, Colonel James put on his sombrero and serape, climbed on his horse, whistled for John Trammell, who appeared from behind a tree, and the pair rode off from Queretaro. The date was June 19, 1867.

A half day's ride from where Jesse bade goodbye to Maximilian the news caught up with him. Benito Juarez' patriots had used a ruse to capture the Emperor, and he and his entire

staff were stood up against a wall and shot by patriots using old muzzle-loading rifles. One of the first to fall was Emperor Maximilian.

With the Emperor dead, Jesse and Trammell avoided towns where demoralized French garrisons were being slaughtered. The Americans spurred their horses and "rode hell for leather" to the hideout. Quantrill had already heard the news of Maximilian's death.

"We got to get out of this ungodly place in a hurry!" he told the joint commander. "I suggest we break camp at once and head north."

With the addition of General Shelby's troops, Quantrill and James now had to worry about 3,000 men. In addition, the party had appropriated several dozen wagons to accommodate sick troopers too weak to walk or ride horses. And, of course, there was the vast quantity of treasure. Many of General Shelby's troopers had regained their strength, which was fortunate because they needed every gun that could be mustered.

For his rear-guard, Jesse chose only 14 men, each armed with a harness containing 10 pistols and carrying two rifles. An hour before the quick tropical twilight the colonel had a chance to test its effectiveness. A French captain and six cavalrymen were observed hot in pursuit of the procession. "Listen carefully," Jesse commanded. "We'll set an ambush. You men kill the cavalrymen, but the captain belongs to me."

When the Frenchmen reached the ambush, Confederate pistols barked and six riders tumbled lifeless from their mounts. The French captain, armed only with a pistol and sword, drew his blade and bravely charged Jesse who had stepped from the shadows. One bullet at such short distance killed the captain's horse and the officer tumbled into the dusty road. As he got up, Jesse shot him in both arms. Then he walked warily up to the Frenchman.

He asked in French, "Why do you attack us, Mon Capitaine? We are friends of your Emperor Maximilian."

"You are thieves and brigands. Maximilian is dead and you are stealing the Hapsburg jewels!"

"Mon Capitaine, you die a liar!" Quickly, the young colonel raised his pistol and fired, hitting the officer above the right eye.

That night around a campfire, Jesse discussed the French attack with his two first cousins, Alexander Franklin James and his kid brother, Jesse R. (Dingus) James, and Quantrill.

The guerrilla chief said gruffly, "We'll have enough trouble with the Mexicans - I didn't anticipate trouble from the French, too."

Jesse lit a cigar. "That's why I shot him, Quantrill, I didn't want him carrying tales."

The third day of their journey 10 Frenchmen led by a fuzzy-cheeked lieutenant tried a rear assault. "Kill every one of the bastards!" Jesse shouted, and his order was carried out. The horses were uninjured and the rearguard men chose fresh mounts.

The party encountered no more Frenchmen but Mexican harassment increased. Although they occasionally attacked the head of the column where Quantrill rode or at the sides, generally the enemy chose to sneak up on the supposedly unguarded rear. Always Jesse and his men, now reduced from 14 to 11, set an ambush. Once they successfully fought off a band of about 200 marauders, leaving the road littered with broken bodies.

Near Monterey, after a conference with Quantrill, Jesse buried two wagonloads of loot, vowing they'd come back to retrieve it later. The two wagons were broken down and would take too long to repair or replace.

At Monterey, Jesse ordered his Missouri cousins, Jesse and Alexander, to pick a detail and herd two wagon loads of Hapsburg jewels northwest toward the Texas Big Bend Country. Then they would head north to where Crane, Texas, now stands, spreading rumors that they had to bury Maximilian's treasure near Horsehead or Bullhead Crossing and other places. The two Missouri Jameses, Alexander and Jesse R., never stopped until they buried the Hapsburg jewels near Three Rivers in Live Oak County, Texas.

Meanwhile, Colonels James and Quantrill split the remaining party into two sections. All crossed the Rio Grande on horses, carts or wagons and headed north. One segment of the treasure was buried in the Free State of Van Zandt, east of where Dallas now stands, and another portion was placed in the ground along the Nueces River below the town of Victoria. After resting for a few days, Gen. J. O. Shelby resumed command of his rescued cavalrymen and they straggled safely back to Missouri.

Jesse James and John Trammell set forth for a visit to Nashville, the Confederate underground capital. When the men arrived there after a leisurely journey, Quantrill had sent a coded message which was waiting for Jesse. When decoded it read, "Urgent. Bring doctor and come at once to Livingston, Texas. You will be expected. Repeat. Urgent. Come at once." Jesse looked up his older brother, Dr. Frank James, the Confederate surgeon, and pressed him into service. The two brothers added John Trammell and two other faithful Negro servants, Bill Garrett and Big Charley to the party. Two Indian friends from the Sioux tribe, Chief Hollow Tree and Big Rock, also joined.

Jesse, who had ridden once with Quantrill in the Missouri- Kansas feud, wondered if Quantrill himself was sick. Because of the urgency of the message, they used the Hoot Owl Trails System, part of the Confederate underground system which provided fresh horses every 30 or 40 miles and food and shelter when needed. When they arrived in Livingston, the Jameses were met by an old Indian friend, who uttered one word, "Come!" They were guided into the Big Thicket Country of East Texas, the domain of the Alabama-Cushattatta Indians. There, amazingly, they met Emperor Maximilian, emaciated and so crippled he had to walk sidewise - but alive! Tomorrow, Dr. Frank would check over His Highness, but this night they would talk.

Over dinner Maximilian told the story of his miraculous escape from death at the hands of the Mexican patriots' firing squad and his equally fantastic escape from the chaotic nation south of the border. The Emperor had heard the crack of the muzzle-loading rifle and then everything went black. Carts were standing by to haul the bodies to a hastily-dug mass grave. At graveside, a priest stood by to give the last rites. At this moment a small party of Red Bone Indians slipped up to the yawning grave, all eyes on their dead Emperor.

As the Mexicans were about to toss His Highness into the grave, one of the Red Bones spotted a movement of Maximilian's right arm...then he started to gasp for breath. Quickly, the Indians talked the Mexicans into allowing them to bury the Emperor in his own grave. The Mexicans shrugged. A dead man was a dead man. Y por que no?

Now the Red Bone Indians had their Emperor, but what would they do with him? The kindly priest pointed to a blanket and His Highness was wrapped up in it and spirited away. Other Red Bone Indians arrived on the scene, safe from the suspicious Mexicans. A captain considered sending word to the two colonels James and Quantrill, but thought better of it. The Red Bones would take the barely living European to East Texas, a remote section where he could recuperate and be safe. Nobody would come looking for a fallen emperor in such a wild place.

Most of the Red Bone regiment had already headed back to Texas, but a couple of dozen of them, two Negroes and a dozen peons riding burros, put Maximilian in a cart and headed north for the Rio Grande.

The Catholic priest who had been at Maximilian's graveside, dressed him in priestly old robes and a hood which hid his face. For several days Maximilian was more dead than alive, but a Red Bone medicineman and the priest nursed him through the crisis as he was jostled through Mexico toward safety. The cart was drawn by a pair of scrawny Mexican mules and travel was slow and painful -- every rock and every jolt was sheer agony for Maximilian.

The memory brought tears to the Emperor's eyes as he continued, "I know now how badly Jesus must have suffered. The terrible road, I was scorned, sneered at, dying over and over with every breath I took. I worried about my dear wife, the Empress, wondering what our enemies in Europe might be doing to her."

"And you, dear Jesse, I worried about you and your brave men. Every night we slept in a Catholic Church and the priest would tell us that the Rothschilds had put a price of \$50,000 on your head and a price of \$25,000 on the heads of the men with you who ambushed and slew perhaps a thousand men as you fought your way north toward Texas. The Mexicans are already calling your trail 'The Road of Death.' "

Maximilian, overcome by emotion, broke into long sobs. Dr. Frank clapped him on the shoulder and said in German, "Regen sie sich nicht suf, Mein Herr, beruhigen sie sich."

(Calm down, don't get upset, settle down.)

Dr. Frank reached into his satchel, brought forth a bottle of brandy, and poured Maximilian two fingers in a glass. After he drank it, Maximilian resumed talking.

"In the past year I have been a harsh man. I have wielded stern penalties against those who disobeyed my orders. I ordered men shot for desertion, when as a matter of human milk, they wanted only to take a day off to see their mother, or sister or children. Never again will I ever order a man beaten, chastised, hung or shot for any infringement of military or civil laws. I owe my new salvation to this tremendous lesson which God brought about. But, if I can only in some miraculous manner learn of the fate of Charlotta and my loved ones."

Dr. Frank James again mentioned the examination he would perform tomorrow and what he hoped to do. But Maximilian changed the subject.

"I want to send a letter to my dear Empress and if necessary give myself up to the enemy so that she can live in safety here in Texas."

Now it was Jesse's turn to talk. "Your Highness, the first thing you have to do is to get an American name. From now on, you'll be known as John Maxi. This talk of giving yourself up is just crazy talk, John Maxi. You're legally dead and you're going to stay that way! We'll get your Charlotta back for you. We'll also get your gold dug up and moved here where it'll be safe. In fact, tomorrow while Dr. Frank decides whether or not to operate, I'm going to get together work parties. There'll be John Trammell, Bill Garrett, Big Charley, my two Sioux friends and about 20 of your loyal Red Bones."

Dr. James the next day began a series of operations. He opened up old wounds, treated them and then sewed them up. It was an early-day therapy, but Frank had a brook dammed and ordered John Maxi to go swimming twice a day in its pool. He no longer walked side-ways, but he suffered pain the remainder of his life.

Meanwhile, Jesse, the Negroes and Indians were busy hauling in dug-up buried treasure from the far parts of Texas. It was buried in a spacious cellar the Red Bones had built under Jesse's direction.

In addition to tending to John Maxi's recovery, Dr. Frank was busy writing letters to U.S. Diplomats in Europe in an attempt to learn the whereabouts of the Empress. He was disturbed by reports the poor woman was insane, but he didn't report this to John Maxi.

When the last of the treasure was stored, Jesse approached Maxi one morning. "John, I'm going to line my pockets with some of your gold and then John Trammell and I are going to Europe posing as wealthy American businessmen. I aim to bring you Charlotta right back here to East Texas."

Maxi grabbed his hand. "Jesse, bring back my wife and I'll give you all my gold!"

Jesse and Trammell headed for Washington and then New York where they sailed for Europe under false names. Jesse, with a \$50,000 price on his head and Trammell, whose head was worth \$25,000, were heading right into the lion's den. Moreover Jesse James was still a declared outlaw.

In mid-Atlantic, John and he stood at the rail and Jesse mused, "John Trammell, you seem to have all the answers. I wonder whose gold we're spending on this trip."

"Trammell grinned broadly, "Yeah, ah wondeh."

"Could be," Jesse said, flipping his soggy stogie into the ocean, "it's Rothschild's gold. Let's see now. Rothschild lent it to Napoleon III, probably with the Pope as a cosigner. Napoleon lent it to Emperor Maximilian and now we borrowed it from John Maxi. I find high finance rather interesting."

Once in Europe, Jesse found a woman who looked like Charlotta - he had a small tintype of her in his pocket. A price was arrived at, two officials were bribed. She replaced Charlotta and Charlotta was spirited out of confinement and out of Europe as a rich businessman's chambermaid. Charlotta's "double" lived until January, 1927.

Jesse recalled years later, "Watching John Maxi and Charlotta embrace after all they'd been through was one of the greatest satisfactions of my life. I'm not one given to tears; but my eyes were sure kind of misty."

Next day, John Maxi sat down for a quiet talk with his friend, Jesse James. "While you retrieved my treasure and went to Europe for my wife I've been doing some serious thinking. I'm going to become a businessman. Money is no good unless it's working for you."

For an hour he told of his plans. First, he wanted to build a sawmill and put his Indian friends to work. He wanted to get into mining, horse and cattle breeding and a dozen other projects. "But for you, Jesse, I want to make a personal gift of \$5 million. You can always get more if you need it. You say there will be another Civil War and I believe you, if you say so. I want to make a contribution of \$12.5 million to your Knights of the Golden Circle, spread out over a couple of years."

The men stood up and Jesse thanked John Maxi, who then presented him with a special cowhide with a contract written in India ink for \$12.5 million. Jesse paused and read it, then handed it back to Maxi. "I move pretty fast around the country, John, so I won't be needing a contract. Your word is good enough for me - it should be after what we've been through."

His saddlebags bulging with gold bars, Jesse took his leave of Maxi and Charlotta next morning, and headed north with his three Negro helpers, who also had saddlebags filled with gold. On the long road leading to Nashville, Tennessee, they stopped at strategic

places to bury Jesse's private treasure.

At a meeting of The Knights of the Golden Circle, Jesse gave a full report on the rescue of Gen. J. O. Shelby's Missouri cavalrymen. Rebel yells filled the room when he related the \$12.5 million gift to the Confederate underground from Emperor Maximilian, alias John Maxi. For his feat, Jesse Woodson James was elected Comptroller General over all Confederate funds. And the day was coming when he would become the ruling head of The Knights of the Golden Circle, the supreme Confederate underground organization.

As long as John Maxi lived, he and Jesse were close friends, but they saw each other infrequently. When the oil boom hit Texas, both Maxi and Jesse were in on the ground floor and their wealth grew. There are hints that John Maxi eventually moved out of the Big Thicket Country and changed his name. Jesse James III admits, "I've talked to Maximilian's grandchildren, but that's all I will say. I'm sure this is the way my grandfather would have wanted it.

"Maximilian's treasure set Grandpa up in business, making him a millionaire five times over at age 23. I don't say that Grandpa never robbed a bank nor a train, but he didn't do it for chickenfeed, and he didn't do it for personal gain. He was a very rich man. When he robbed or hijacked he was trying to fill a long list of Confederate depositories, preparing for the Second Civil War, which never came."

But who lies buried in Emperor Maximilian's grave in Vienna? After six weeks of bargaining, Juarez finally delivered the "mortal remains of Maximilian" to Admiral Tegetthoff aboard the Novara in Vera Cruz harbor. The royalty of Europe sighed with relief.

The body accorded an imperial funeral by Emperor Franz Josef was badly decomposed and unidentifiable. Golden Circle agents claimed it was the corpse of a seaman of German ancestry who had been killed in a drunken gunfight behind a bar in Vera Cruz. Switching bodies is a subterfuge as old as mankind, and the Golden Circle certainly had no monopoly on this practice.

Chapter 6

The Fateful Summer of '76

"Boys," Jesse Woodson James liked to tell his wide eyed grandchildren, "the history of the Old West has never been told because the men who made our nation grow didn't have time to stop, record or tell about everything they did - things moved too fast."

But as an old man, Jesse had lots of time to talk and look back. He never forgot what was crammed into the summer of 1876. From June 25 to September 7, a span of less than two and a half months, Gen. George A. Custer and 277 of his troopers died at the Little Big Horn, James Butler (Wild Bill) Hickock was killed in a Deadwood bar, and a massive raid on a Northfield, Minnesota, bank ended in bloody failure. Jesse James was involved in all three of these history making incidents.

During the winter of 1959 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, two oldtimers, Timothy Ardell Capps, 88, and Frank Curtis, 98, an illiterate Negro gifted with an agile mind, discussed the U.S. 7th Cavalry's fate at the Battle of the Little Big Horn and signed a series of sworn statements.

Curtis had been a teenage bullwhacker there that fateful day at Little Big Horn - along with his father and older brother. Capps' father, Timothy Leonard Capps, and his uncle, Carl Capps, were eyewitnesses, too; Tim had grown up learning the history of the Old West from their mouths.

Although the Civil War had been over more than a decade when Custer made his foolish foray into Indian country, former Confederate soldiers hadn't forgotten the North-South conflict. Jesse W. James was an unreconstructed Southerner and he remembered the 15 bullet holes he received fighting for the Stars and Bars. To Jesse, Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph and other chiefs were Confederate allies because General Custer, a damnyankee who'd fought at Bull Run and other battles, was a Union officer. So he looked upon Custer, a dashing but vain man with presidential ambitions, as the real enemy.

By 1876 the 32-year-old James owned a thriving freight line business, and long before Custer's demise, he had been running guns to Indians on the Northern Plains. Curtis, who worked for Jesse James, recalled how easy it had been. In late winter, 1876, 150 heavy wagons were loaded at Camp Worth (now Fort Worth), Texas, with food, cloth, canned goods, saddles, blankets, etc. - but mostly with the latest 44-40 Winchester repeating rifles and ammunition. The new rifles had been purchased by Jesse through "regular channels."

Capps said his father told him there were 10 wagons to a crew and the two Cappses and the three Curtises were teamsters in one of the 15 crews. Some of Colonel James' wagons were so heavy they had to be pulled by eight teams of horses. As the wagons groaned northward no one, particularly the military, paid much heed. Trade with the Indians was

growing and profitable. Besides, the rifles, 10 to a wooden case, and shells, were cleverly hidden. Each wagon carried a small gold and white flag, Jesse James' secret safe conduct pass known throughout the Indian nations.

Months before the wagon train left Camp Worth, Jesse and other former Confederate officers had trained the Sioux in the use of the new Winchester repeating rifle, a gun far superior to what the U.S. 7th Cavalry had. More than a dozen Winchesters and half a dozen Gatling guns had been stolen from the U.S. Arsenal at Rock Island, Ill., by Jesse's daring agents. The Indians were taught to use the new rifles, with the promise of more to come.

The early-day machine gun had been invented by Richard Jordan Gatling of North Carolina. It consisted of a number of breech-loading rifle barrels constructed to revolve around a common center. Cartridges were supplied by an ingenious, spring-wound device, making it possible to fire 1,200 .45 calibre bullets per minute from a 10-barreled gun. The U.S. Army had adopted the Gatling gun in 1866.

What would primitive Plains Indians, used to riding their ponies bareback, do with a Gatling gun? Colonel James imported a dozen large, gentle Missouri mules to a secret training ground in Dakota Territory. He devised a way to strap the Gatling guns to the backs of the mules; with four Indian warriors astride their ponies a mobile gun crew was formed.

Equally important, the former Confederate experts convinced their willing Indian pupils that their old practice of playing ring-around-the-rosie with the white man's wagon train was obsolete. They were trained to fight like Morgan's Raiders and Quantrill's Missouri guerrillas - to split up on command, hit with force and devastation and then fade away before the enemy could recover.

Curtis remembered that about noon on the fateful Sun-day of June 25 Custer and his men rode up over the hill east of the river toward the vast Indian encampment situated on the west side of the Little Big Horn. Custer found a peaceful camp with only women, children and older Indians. No doubt the Indians were surprised. They had expected their confrontation with the U.S. Army to take place during the hunting season in August.

Capps said that Colonel James broke open wagon after wagon where they'd halted a safe distance from the actual battlefield and passed out about 2,000 repeating rifles and ammunition as the Indian warriors rode by. The Indians tossed away an assortment of old muzzle-loaders, spears, tomahawks and bows and arrows when the new repeaters were thrust into their hands. Then they raced their ponies to the battlefield and opened fire on Custer's men.

Because of the timing, the Indians had been able to get only two of their mounted Gatling guns into action, but these were coupled with repeating rifles. General Custer had never faced such awesome firepower. Capps said, "The battle was over in not too many minutes. It was a one-sided slaughter, my father told me."

Eyewitness Curtis didn't mention it, but Tim Capps' father told him, "I know Custer, the fighting general, didn't show much bravery when face to face with a blaze of hatred that day, so he up and shot himself on the last go-around."

Fifty years after the battle, Colonel James verified Custer's suicide, saying. "The Indians had him disarmed and captured. He asked for the return of his pistol so he could 'die like a soldier'. After a brief pow-wow, the Indians gave it back to him and he shot himself in the heart."

Jesse and a former Confederate general who had been training the Indians, ordered the main 3,000-man victorious force to divide, scatter and vanish from the battlefield; Sitting Bull called off the other, Indians who surrounded Major Reno's troopers on a nearby hill.

Some historians have long insisted there were some survivors of the Custer massacre and they are right. Golden Circle accounts say 17 ex-Rebel troopers brought out their diagonal gold-white flags and escaped.

Capps testified, "Dad told me that all dead troopers were mutilated, scalped and stripped, but not the body of General Custer. His corpse was left where it fell."

Colonel James passed the word to his teamsters to "get the hell out real fast." The 150 wagons broke into units of 10 each, circled the nearby hills and headed east to Deadwood, Dakota Territory, where the feverish Black Hills Gold Rush was eating up supplies faster than they could arrive. Enroute, they stored about a thousand new repeating rifles, five-hundred pistols and a quantity of ammunition in a secret dry cave Jesse had used before. On August 1, 1876, the lightened freight wagons rolled into booming Deadwood, and much-needed supplies they contained were purchased by eager merchants and miners as fast as they could be unloaded. While his teamsters slaved away under the hot sun, Jesse learned that an old Civil War adversary, Wild Bill Hickock, was in town.

Sitting on an empty wagon, Jesse enjoyed a few chuckles with his brother, Dr. Frank James and his first cousin, Grat Dalton (the Sundance Kid) as he recalled his last run in with Hickock, in 1870. Jesse's men had gone to Wichita, Kansas, to help build railroad beds and grades. Hickock was the marshal. Jesse recalled, "The first night we were in a saloon Wild Bill came in strutting around and yelling in his high-pitched sing-song voice what he would do to all 'Texans, renegades, rebels, etc.' None of us had a word to say - we just let him orate."

The third night in town, Wild Bill, who had a reputation for being a crack shot, bully and cold-blooded murderer, picked on one of Jesse's foremen without provocation and threatened to kill him.

Jesse had been asleep in a nearby hotel when word reached him. He got up, dressed, put on his six-guns and went looking for the marshal. He learned that Hickock, whose

manhood at times was doubted, was a customer in a nearby parlor house. Jesse bribed the Negro maid with a twenty-dollar gold piece, went upstairs and kicked in the door to the room Wild Bill was temporarily occupying.

Dr. Frank grinned. "Stone naked, too, as I recollect you telling it, Jesse."

"Nope, only the assistant marshal was naked. They were both in there with one soiled dove."

Motioning with his two pistols, Jesse marched Wild Bill out into the street in his red flannel drawers and stockinginged feet. Right behind Hickock was his deputy. Jesse chuckled. "Yep, it was quite a parade, kind of a freak show. Bill in his flannel drawers and his taller assistant, who was just plain bare-footed all over!"

After herding the two lawmen past leering faces peeking over swinging doors of the saloons, Jesse convoyed the pair to a point just beyond the edge of town. Wild Bill swore the next time they met he'd kill Jesse on sight. But the Kentuckian laughed and fired a couple of shots into the midnight air and the two men trotted westward over the new railroad grade.

Jesse squirted a stream of tobacco juice into the dusty Deadwood street and chuckled, "I guess you might say that Wild Bill resigned in a hurry that night because his feathers had been plucked."

History records that Wild Bill headed west to Dodge City and then north to Hays, Kansas. Being a crack shot - he fired from the hip - Hickock teamed up with William F. Cody for awhile and then drifted up to Nebraska and then into Dakota Territory.

Historians and pulp authors, completely ignoring the facts, relate that Hickock, the terror of the plains, was shot in the back on Wednesday night, Aug. 2, 1876, while playing poker with his back to the door in a Deadwood saloon. Perhaps they feel justified in their version because Bill always sat facing the door, and it was believed that no gunman alive could outshoot Hickock face-to-face. But Jesse, Dr. Frank, the Sundance Kid and Jesse's three fanatically loyal black bodyguards, John Trammell, Lucky Johnson and Big Charlie, swear it didn't happen that way. They remembered that Jesse was of good cheer that hot August night in 1878. It had been a fine trip, the "Union" enemy had been slaughtered, the surplus arms had been tucked away in the hidden cache and all merchandise had been sold speedily at inflated prices.

A small cerebration seemed in order and the three white and three black men felt the need of a few drinks to wash the prairie dust from their throats. What better place than the No. 10 Saloon, the ex-Confederate hangout where the damn yankees feared to tread? Led by Colonel James, the men trooped into the sweltering bar. The din was terrific as drunken voices sought to sing Southern marching songs. Moths buzzed around hanging kerosene lamps and the light was poor.

Like the leader of a cavalry troop, Jesse held up his right hand. Could he believe his eyes? Standing nonchalantly at the bar were Wild Bill Hickock and a major in the U.S. Army. What was Hickock doing in the No. 10? Was he seeking out his hated enemy? Jesse's blue eyes grew narrow and deadly. He recalled that night six years ago in Wichita when Wild Bill had sworn to kill him on sight the next time they met.

Although he ordinarily spoke mildly, Jesse James could shout when he had to. Above the racket of the busy saloon he roared, "Okay, Hickock, this is it! Either way, you're as good as dead - so take it standing or laying down!"

Startled by the challenge, Wild Bill spilled his drink on the bar and slowly turned to peer at Jesse. His face chalk white and suddenly dripping perspiration, Hickock stared at the colonel for a full five seconds, but he made no move toward his guns. The major beside Hickock made a sudden move, and Jesse shot the officer in the arm, knocking him end over end. The next shot hit Wild Bill just above his right eye - the usual Jesse James trademark. Hickock was dead when he hit the floor.

Jesse slowly stuffed his pistol back into its holster and a series of Rebel yells shook the No. 10. While Dr. James patched up the major. Confederate sympathizers dragged Wild Bill over to a table near the door, set him down, poured a couple of quarts of liquor over his long hair and clothing and then placed a "dead man's hand" of cards on the table. Jesse, who neither approved nor disapproved of the action, gathered his group together. "Well, men, we came in here to wet our whistles so belly up to the bar." He signalled the barkeep by holding up six fingers.

The bartender hesitantly shook his head. "We-all don't serve Niggers..."

"The hell you don't!" Jesse countered. "I got a twenty- dollar gold piece that says you do. You'll serve John, Lukry and Big Charley because they're my bodyguards, so get moving."

The man behind the bar frowned. "By the looks of things, Colonel, you don't need no bodyguards." But he served the drinks and Trammell spoke for his two black companions when he held his glass aloft and said, "Cheers, Colonel, suh."

Jesse turned and kicked his older brother's boot which clung to the brass rail. "What was it, Frank, that doctor at the medical school used to tell you about whiskey?"

Frank smiled. "He said if you want to live a long and healthy life don't drink bad booze."

"The trouble is," Jesse said, "I ain't never drunk any whiskey that was bad." The man with the sharp blue eyes, beard and square jaw ordered another round. The din grew louder and Wild Bill, sitting dead at the table, was forgotten by the roistering patrons.

Then a young teamster from Nacona, Texas, named Jack McCall cautiously manoeuvred close to Jesse and hesitantly said, "Nice shot, Colonel."

The freight train owner smiled. "Jack, you ever have to kill a man?"

"Oh, no, Colonel, I ain't neveh yit kilt a man," the young man replied.

Jesse set his drink down and carefully lit a cigar. "Well, young Jack McCall, I got a reputation too big for one lone man so I'm giving you the gun that shot perhaps the most hated man I ever met."

James pulled the pistol from its holster. "Jack, here is my gun, tote it proudly and you keep it. I'm hereby giving you before all these witnesses the credit for the demise of Wild Bill Hickock. Let it be known from now on that you are the man with the gun that killed a spying, damnyankee sonuvabitch."

Years later, Jesse said giving his gun to young Jack McCall was done on impulse. An act of kindness. With all the exConfederates jammed into the No. 10 it never occurred to him that McCall could get into any kind of trouble. Jesse had no sooner ordered McCall's empty beer glass refilled than a careful, almost apologetic lawman entered the No. 10 to investigate a report that Wild Bill Hickock had been shot.

The loud talk and singing stopped and to a man the exConfederates swore young McCall had shot in self-defense, but the lawman shook his head. "There may be big trouble because nobody, but nobody, ever faced Wild Bill Hickock with a gun and lived to tell about it."

As the lawman led the Texas youngster away, Jesse whispered, "Don't you worry, McCall, we'll get you out of this."

Then Jesse turned to his men, put a wad of bills on the bar and said, "Have a few more. I gotta go pay a social call. John Trammell, drink up and come along with me, you hear?" It was cooler outside and Jesse and his trusted black aide stopped briefly by their horses to talk.

"Colonel, suh," Trammell said, "dat was some shootin' - you drill dat Wild Bill right ovah de right eye, yo did."

Jesse fingered his saddle. "John, you know I never brag or gloat over killing a man - much less talk about it afterward."

Trammell was suddenly troubled. "Yo know, Colonel, suh, dat one marshal he say Wild Bill shot in de back. He crazy - why de back of Bill's head done blown away!"

"Don't worry, John, no jury will convict young McCall. I'll see to that. I'm damnable sorry I got him involved - just a spur of the moment thing. I wasn't fixing to get him in trouble."

They mounted their horses and Trammell asked, "Where to, Colonel, suh?"

"We're going to visit Calamity Jane Hickock's shack to talk to a little girl named Jean and tell her I shot her father tonight."

Calamity Jane, born Martha Jane Cannary in 1852, was a tough, cursing, alcoholic, sometimes whore and bull-whacker who had married Hickock on Sept. 1, 1870, just 24 days before her daughter was born. But Wild Bill had divorced Jane and moved in with a "theatrical woman." Some said Bill broke off the marriage because he thought the child wasn't his or because his wife drank too much. But others, and there were many, claimed Hickock was a bully and a low-principled mad killer and was "no damn good from the word go." Bad as Calamity Jane was at times, they felt she was too good for the trigger-happy gunman. Sometimes Jane stayed drunk for days, but on the warm night of Aug. 2, Colonel James and John Trammell found her fairly sober and her modest shack quite neat and presentable.

Young Jean, who would be 6 on Sept. 25, happily crawled on Jesse's knee while Trammell, who had killed dozens of men with his tough black knuckles, told her simple folk stories.

Calamity Jane poured herself half a glass of whisky and asked, "What you been up to since I last laid eyes on you, Colonel?"

Jesse looked at her calmly. "Well, Jane, there's been a killing. You hear about it?"

Jane took a long swallow. "Yeah, I know, so the Injuns killed General Custer. No great loss. No loss atall, really. Don't blame the Injuns. The miners is running 'em outa the Black Hills with this goddamn gold rush. A cornered rat'll fight, you know, Jesse."

Jesse put his arms tightly around Jean Hickock. "No, not that killing, Jane. I mean this little girl no longer has a pappy after what happened tonight."

Jane jumped up and walked quickly to the open door, staring out into the Dakota darkness. Her voice was calm. "You mean somebody finally shot that no-good varmint?" She returned to her bottle and sloshed more amber fluid into her glass. Her hand shook ever so slightly.

Jesse cleared his throat. "I'd like to suggest, ma'm, that Deadwood's no place for little Jean. We got to get her out Of here."

Jane leered at him. "For Chrissake, Jesse, you got any ideas? Ain't her own mother good enough for her?"

"It's not you, Jane. Deadwood is a roaring, shooting town at the edge of the world. No place to bring up a little girl. Let me send her back to some of my kin in Maryland where it's safe. I'll take care of all expenses and pay for her education. And once a year, I'll

pay your way back there to visit her."

Jesse W. James, who could be as quick with persuasion as he was with his six guns, sold his idea to the raw frontier woman. The day the awkward Jack McCall was exonerated in the death of Wild Bill and headed back to Texas aboard one of Jesse's freight wagons, a stagecoach pulled out of Deadwood with little Jean Hickock and a trusted matron, whom Jesse had hired. He had given Calamity Jane a thousand dollars to seal the bargain.

Neither Jesse nor Calamity knew it at the time, but the Kentucky-born outlaw would be a force in her life until she died in 1903 at the age of 51. Jane worked as a bullwhacker for him now and then in Montana and when she was too drunk to drive horses, he supplied her with enough money to keep the wolf from the door.

When he was an old man, Jesse told his grandchildren, "Calamity in her day, in my opinion, was no worse and certainly no better than some Sunday School marm I could mention. She risked her own life many times to nurse people deathly ill with smallpox. She was a woman who feared nothing. She wouldn't run from the devil himself."

Eventually, Calamity Jane and Wild Bill were buried side by side on a cemetery hill overlooking Deadwood and each summer thousands of tourists climb the steps to peer down on their lonely graves. Pulp writers still romanticize their strange and tragic "love affair." It's a story which refuses to die.

The saga of Jean Hickock is even more astounding. The stagecoach that carried her east from Deadwood that morning began the long journey to the home of Cole Younger's wife in Maryland. Cole, who had once married Jesse James' sister, Rebecca, was a member in good standing in "the James gang." And so, Jean a 71-year-old woman identifying herself as Jean Hickock McCormick appeared from the long-forgotten shadows of the past and stepped into the editorial offices of the Billings, Montana, Gazette in 1941.

After the Gazette splashed the story across page one oldtimers drifted in to have a look at the long-lost daughter of Wild Bill and Calamity Jane. Yellowed documents were passed around and yarns were exchanged. There was no consensus, but Jean Hickock McCormick received her old age pension when she applied. Down in Texas, her long-time benefactor, Jesse W. James, who used the name of Col. J. Frank Dalton along with 71 other aliases in his lifetime, read the story of her "emergence" with interest. He knew Jean, the little girl he once held on his knee, was telling the truth, for he had financially looked after Jean until she married the man named McCormick and she continued to correspond with the outlaw. She died in 1951 at the age of 81 a few months before Jesse James said goodbye to the Old West forever.

Getting back to 1876, with the Jack McCall case "settled," Jesse and Frank James said farewell to their cousin, the Sundance Kid, at dawn one morning in Deadwood and headed east into the rising sun. With them were John Trammell, lucky Johnson and Big Charlie. Their destination was the First National Bank in the small town of Northfield,

Minnesota.

A few days after the five horsemen left, a swamper, much older than the teenage Jack McCall, was suddenly charged with the murder of Wild Bill Hickock because he, too, was named McCall. Sometimes double jeopardy meant little in frontier justice. The middle-aged man was tried, convicted and hung almost before he knew what was happening to him.

While Frank and Jesse and their helpers trotted eastward across the dusty plains toward Minnesota, another segment of "the James gang" headed northward from Jackson County, Missouri. Included in this group were Cole, Jim and Bob Younger, Bill Chadwell(alias Bill Stiles), Arch Clements and Sam Wells (alias Charlie Pitts). In all, 14 white men, three Negroes and an Indian guide would strike the Northfield bank on Thursday, Sept. 7, 1876. Some writers claim that the job was planned by Frank James and Arch Clements while others charge it was Jesse's project. But this was not the case.

One night in late August the five men sat around a campfire near the Dakota Territory-Minnesota boundary. Dr. Frank grumbled, "I'm tired of listening to those damn crickets so I got to say this, Jesse. I don't like this Northfield deal at all - it's too damn deep into damnyankee territory."

Jesse puffed on a long cigar and gazed thoughtfully into the burning coals. "I feel like you do, Frank, but this is Cole Younger's idea. We promised to help him - and we'll keep our word."

Col. James may have been an unreconstructed Confederate, but Cole Younger, his brother-in-law, was an unreformed guerrilla. He had fought through some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War with Quantrill's deadly raiders and the bitter memories caused his heart to cry out for vengeance.

Gen. "Spoons" Butler, who had been an overbearing Union general, was accused by many Southerners of confiscating their prize heirlooms and silverware; thus his nickname "Spoons." Cole Younger claimed that Butler's First National Bank in Northfield held as much as \$500,000 and would be easy to overwhelm.

Cole had told Jesse, "We should pull this job - not for personal gain, but for vengeance. Old 'Spoons' robbed the people of the South; now we'll rob him in return."

The Northfield raid turned out to be bloody for the "James gang," but it inspired millions of words of purple prose about the raid, and scores of variations have been served up through the decades. Some historians had the entire raiding party leaving Kansas City and heading straight to St. Paul, out of the way and to the north of Northfield, where the men registered as "cattlemen." Other writers had them boldly checking into Northfield lodgings the night before the holdup attempt.

As an old man, Jesse James recalled the men rendezvoused in Mankato, Minnesota, 42

miles southwest of Northfield as the crow flies, two days before the assault.

About the only item everyone agrees upon is that the gang ran into an aroused citizenry in Northfield, and the gang fled the town in a wild hail of bullets. Jesse and Frank, the three Younger boys, Bill Stiles and Clell Miller were wounded; Charley Pitts was killed a short time later in a Medalia, Minnesota, gunfight, but right here the "experts" begin to disagree on what really took place.

Colonel James says Stiles was not killed. "He escaped with his wounds and some Swede was buried in his place. Clell Miller recovered from his wounds and died a natural death in Murray, Arkansas. Stiles died of old age in California in the late 1930's, but some writer put fancy words in his mouth. Stiles was an unimportant man in robbery attempt and not in the inner circle at all."

And there is wide disagreement over who shot and killed the acting cashier, Joseph Haywood. A finger was pointed at both Jesse and Frank, certainly no strangers to murder, but old Jesse claimed "one of the men, I don't know which one, killed Haywood."

The three Youngers all were wounded and captured. History records they were tried, pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to life imprisonment in Stillwater, Minnesota, State Prison.

In the twilight of his life, Jesse James said confidently, "The Youngers never served a day in Stillwater Prison. They licked their wounds on a ranch near Leadville, Colorado, on the Arkansas River. When they recovered, all three Youngers scattered."

Who did go to Stillwater Prison then? Old Jesse smiled, his blue eyes dancing. "Well, when big money is involved, big lawyers can travel pretty fast. I was a very rich man in 1876, and money talked. While Frank and I hid out in a German colony in Dakota Territory recovering from our hurts, a top lawyer - I won't mention his name - was 'fixing' things up in St. Paul, Minnesota. He did such a good job that the governor of Minnesota probably died without learning the truth. The three Dodson brothers from Kansas city stood in' for the three Younger brothers at Stillwater Prison. The price was right. They were each paid \$300 a month for their confinement. I should know - I was the one who paid them."

Magazine writers relate that "Bob Younger" died Sept. 16, 1889, of consumption at Stillwater. And they report that "through the aid of friends" the two remaining "Youngers" were released after serving 25 years behind bars.

Old Jesse said before he died, "I imagine that if you go up to St. Paul and look in the newspaper files, you'll find a story that sometime in the fall of 1902, 'Jim Younger' committed suicide in a hotel room. The reason for the suicide as given out by the papers was that a young girl who had promised to marry him when he was released refused to go through the ceremony. Well, that isn't exactly the truth for two reasons. First, it wasn't Jim Younger, but one of the Dodson brothers. Second, he- didn't commit suicide - I killed

him and made it look like a suicide. You see, after getting \$300 a month from me for 25 years, this Dodson was trying to blackmail me for \$50,000. I just wouldn't hold still for that - so I shot him."

Most accounts of the Northfield bank raid report that all 14 men involved had terrible hangovers. Old Jesse didn't deny it. He smiled wistfully. "Yes, I'm afraid that is right. With the exception of Cole Younger, who planned the job, we all did get pretty drunk the night before the raid at some fair or carnival. It was poor judgment, getting drunk like that and we had king-sized hangovers. The whole Northfield job seemed doomed from the start. Actually, it wasn't too well planned, and it was poorly executed. It was one damn mess. About 90 per cent of the jobs I pulled during the War Between the States and in years afterward were the result of inside information. We didn't have that at Northfield. So we bungled it." Thus did old Jesse W. James describe the final episode in the fateful summer '76.

Chapter 7

The World Was Jesse's Oyster

Capitalism was probably invented by an early caveman who moved his growing family into a larger cave and rented the smaller one out.

Capitalism was Jesse Woodson James' cup of tea and he could probably take credit for inventing "Saddlebag Capitalism," - at least he made it work.

In 1940, a prominent Dallas attorney, who had a partial idea of what old Jesse, alias Colonel J. Frank Dalton, was worth, said, "If all this white-haired old man's assets suddenly dropped off the globe, we'd have a depression which would make the recent one seem like a Sunday School picnic. I always wanted to meet King Midas and now I've met him, only he's using the name Dalton."

A keen student of law, old Jesse in his final years set up a complex system of trust funds, which fed or drained a myriad of corporations. What was the old man's worth when he died in 1951? Relatives closest to him say the figure was somewhere between \$1 billion and \$2 billion with one estimate as high as \$10 billion. But the world may never know because there is a strong suspicion old Jesse James liked to bury assets as he buried gold. I will deal with the complexities and ramifications of the old man's last will and testament in the Epilogue.

Hiding behind at least 72 aliases, Jesse's business ventures in the West are hard to pinpoint. Only after his death were oldtime associates willing to sign notarized statements verifying the alias he used while operating a particular enterprise. Even then, some of the oldtimers couldn't always agree on the alias he used most frequently in a given region. However, most of them knew he was Jesse Woodson James, but preferred to be known simply as "The Colonel," unless pinned down by a legal instrument. But Jesse was hard to pin down. He was slippery as an eel and crafty as a fox. And if newspapermen or historians of the Old West came to him, Jesse would direct them to his local manager, who in all cases was as close-mouthed as The Colonel. Jesse's favorite dodge went: "Me? I'm just a nobody - just one of thousands of young men who came out here years ago to seek my fortune in the West. If I ever make that fortune I'll be the first to look you up and give you my story. Right now, I'm slaving like hell to keep the wolf from the door. Go interview a famous man and forget about me - I'm just a nobody."

One might get the impression that Jesse James was a "loner." Far from it. He had children, legitimate or otherwise, scattered throughout the West. His brother, Morgan James, changed his name and owned a ranch in Colorado. Brother Peter also lived in Colorado while Levi James, another brother, owned property around Moab, Utah, and in Idaho. Both Peter and Levi died under their real last name of James.

And Obediah Howk, married to Jesse's twin sister, Matilda, managed Jesse's affairs in St. Louis and often served as his double in the lower Midwest. Jesse had strong allies among the Indians of the West and Southwest. And members of The Organization (at first the Golden Circle and later Jesse's own group) were never more than "a half day's ride away anywhere in the West."

You've already read how Jesse, age 22 or 23, was given \$5 million outright by Emperor Maximilian. This was a fantastic fortune in those days and the young man, although outlawed, could have cleared his name in the courts or moved to a foreign country and lived a life of ease ever after. But there were his obligations to the Confederate Underground and Jesse's restless spirit and fantastic energy and enterprise.

Jesse James III has spent the last fifty years of his life trying to piece together the economic jigsaw puzzle his grandfather created. He received help from relatives closest to the old outlaw and Jesse III has spent thousands of dollars running down his grandfather's former associates and employees who are (or were) scattered across the face of the nation. In his fading years, the old man divulged most of his lifetime secrets to Jesse III and named executor of his will. But there are certain secrets which his favorite grandson refuses to disclose, pleading they "would serve no useful purpose and might even harm innocent people."

Old Jesse was one of Henry Ford's original backers and many of Jesse's livery stables became early Ford automobile dealerships. Jesse III says, "On at least two occasions I was present when Grandpa and the auto magnate got together in the 1920's."

Jesse III particularly recalls the 1928 meeting. "It took place in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, at the cafe and hotel owned by Albert Brown. Grandpa always called Mr. Ford 'Henry' and Mr. Ford called him 'Colonel' or 'Jesse.' Yes, Henry Ford knew Grandpa was Jesse James and never let the cat out of the bag. The automaker complained that his wife didn't like the idea of him 'hobnobbing with outlaws' so Jesse James became Jack Halbrook to Mr. Ford. In 1928, Grandpa told Mr. Ford, 'Henry, don't let your wife push you around or pretty soon you'll be wearing the skirts and she'll be wearing the pants. My theory has always been not to discuss business with any women.' Mr. Ford laughed at that.

"The Ford Model A was new in 1928 and Henry Ford gave one to Grandpa with a request to give it a rugged test. Grandpa protested, 'Henry, you know damn well I don't drive.' So Grandpa gave it to his ranch hands for testing in conjunction with a 1928 Chevrolet. The cowhands reported the Chevrolet superior to the Model A. Jesse was dismayed. 'For God's sake, don't ever tell Mr. Ford or he'll have a fit!' I don't know if old Jesse ever told Mr. Ford or not."

An early backer of Henry Ford, Jesse James once "borrowed" his name in Brownwood, Brown County, Texas, where he posed as a banker. Somehow Jesse became involved in a financial scandal (easy for old Jesse) and in 1913 the papers reported "Banker and Mrs. Henry Ford died of food poisoning." It was just another case of a fake death and burial for which Jesse James had become notorious.

With capital to burn, Jesse was a backer of the Hughes Tool Company, which was founded by Howard Hughes' father. As J. W. Gates, Jesse was one of the founders of the Texas Company at Sour Lake, Texas. As Dave Moffat, a "Colorado banker," Jesse and associates in 1902 built the Denver, Pacific & Northwestern Railway (renamed the Denver & Salt Lake (Moffat) Railway) and in the 1920s the Moffat Tunnel was built with public funds.

Corporations or individuals doing business as "companies" were tailor-made for Jesse James' nefarious, secretive business schemes. In the 1890s using the alias J. J. Corley, Jesse's company built a narrow gauge railroad from Colorado City to Victor and Cripple Creek. One of Jesse's companies built a stretch of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad through the Montana mountains. Another company composed of possibly three Jesse James aliases W. A. Clark, D. H. Moffat and J. J. Corley - was a heavy stock-holder in San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad.

Jesse ran a profitable freighting business in Colorado under the alias of Colonel Roy Hewitt. He was a principal in the Moffat Brothers Construction Company in Colorado and as W. J. Moffat he owned his own race track on Long Island. At eastern race tracks he was known as "Bet a Million" Gates. He acquired this name as the result of betting with another millionaire on which raindrop would reach the bottom of a window pane first. Jesse, alias Gates, lost and promptly paid up. He seldom made bets of this nature.

The outlaw loved horseflesh. During his lifetime he bred thousands of thoroughbreds, shipping more than a hundred to England. He bred quarter horses and the famous Steeldust horses, all descended from the early racing champion. Jesse's brother, Dr. Frank, developed an early method of artificial insemination and Jesse's breeders used it not only for horses but with mules, which were raised in Calloway County, Missouri. Jesse's contract breeders also bred trotting and saddle horses. He was fascinated by how Indians bred their ponies, saying, "At first, I thought it was haphazard, but I soon learned they used selective breeding methods, sometimes superior to the white man's way." The magnificent wild stallions of the West and their mustang mares also attracted Jesse's attention and wonderment. He helped develop San Gertrudis cattle in Texas, naming them for his daughter, Gertrude (Gertie) Clark.

If Allan Pinkerton or his agents had known, they could have located the elusive Jesse James at almost any major horse race. He said, "If there was a horse race within a hundred miles, I'd manage to be there." He seldom missed the Kentucky Derby, beginning with the first one held at Louisville in 1875. Jesse considered himself an infallible judge of horses and bet huge amounts on his choices. He even bet on Indian, frontier and "country boy" horse races.

Jesse owned stock in various racetracks around the country. In 1934 he bought a bloc of stock in Santa Anita Racetrack in Arcadia, California, and was there on opening day. He had known E. J. (Lucky) Baldwin, who owned the original Arcadia track, and occasionally visited him both in San Francisco and Arcadia. Once, Baldwin tried to

borrow money from Jesse in Arcadia. "The old man was sincere enough, but I knew he was a high-roller gambler and sometimes he forgot to pay his debts, so I begged off saying I was a little short." Jesse recalled.

By the same token, Jesse grubstaked many down-and-out prospectors (with a promise of one-third interest in any strike) and he financed many weary cowpokes in purchasing a small ranch. No poor medical or divinity student went without a loan if Jesse heard about it.

In his wanderings, Jesse James built up a tremendous knowledge of economic trends. For instance, his freight and stagecoach lines became bus and railroad lines. His livery stables became automobile agencies. He owned vaudeville houses in St. Louis, Chicago, Salt Lake City, Denver and Kansas City which became motion picture theaters. He even took a fling at making early-day motion pictures in Colorado and later put money into the infant Hollywood movie industry, but got out, claiming it was "run by a pack of low-principled, buck-hungry leeches."

He invested heavily in circuses, rodeos and wild west shows. He owned a dozen ranches scattered from Texas north through Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Nevada and Oregon. His mines produced gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc and coal. He owned brickyards and lumberyards. He even owned river steamers and ocean-going freighters. Indeed, the world was Jesse's oyster.

Being highly competitive, railroading appealed to Jesse's nature. In the 1940s, he recalled, "I owned blocks of stock in railroad companies and the Golden Circle owned a passle, too. Congress and Westerners wanted the railroads built and manipulations or downright thievery were a fact of life. We bucked competitors and sometimes we got in each other's hair. We had quite a tug-of-war going with Jay Gould and his company which sought to grab the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas River. We of the Denver & Rio Grande had our detectives and agents trading potshots with the Santa Fe. But it wasn't bullets which turned the trick. The federal courts granted us the right-of-way through the Royal Gorge west of Canon City. Another time, my old enemy, Jay Gould, announced he would build a lucrative railroad spur into Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was so confident that he hadn't even bought up the right-of-way yet. I sent agents out who bought key sections for a song and then we sold it to Gould for a cool \$2 million. Those sort of things sort of appealed to my cantankerous nature."

I have visited the site of Jesse's coup over Gould. High - 7,400 feet - in Glorieta Pass, about 16 miles southeast of historic Santa Fe, stands an old ranch house, built on the Pigeon Ranch in 1848. Jesse kept the ranch in the early 1900s and it eventually ended up in the hands of the Green family.

Actually, Jesse blocked Gould so he could finish his "Chili Line," a narrow-gauge branch of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad from Santa Fe to Alamosa, Colorado.

If the decrepit old ranch house could talk it could tell many secrets of the Old West and

Confederate Underground intrigue. Under its roof have slept Sen. Stephen B. Elkins, R-West Virginia (Missouri Jesse R. James); Elkin's father-in-law, Sen. Henry Gassaway Davis, D-West Virginia (Cole Younger); John Patterson (Jefferson Davis); Butch Cassidy, Sundance Kid, Pancho Villa, Bill Roberts (Billy the Kid), Dr. Frank James of Kentucky, Bob Dalton, El Fago Baca and scout Kit Carson.

Indian tribes battled in Glorieta Pass a thousand years before Don Francisco Vasquez de Coronado struggled through in 1540 and was ambushed by Indian residents. Instead of the fabled Seven Golden Cities of Cibola, several of Coronado's charges found arrows in their throats.

March 26-27, 1862, Union and Confederate forces fought a bloody battle in Glorieta Pass. One of the Dixie cavalrymen, Captain John James, Jesse's older brother, reportedly dumped a payroll of \$125,000 in the old well across the road from the Pigeon Ranch house after Confederate supply wagons were burned by the Colorado Union volunteers. If the treasure has ever been found, it wasn't reported - but then found treasures seldom are.

While the Union and Confederate soldiers blasted each other to pieces with musket lead, minie balls and grape shot, Apache warriors watched from nearby high points. Then they launched a powerful pincher movement against the white combatants.

For the only time in the Civil War, the boys in Blue and Gray stood side-by-side to beat off repeated murderous charges by the Apaches. In a letter to his brother, Jesse, Captain John James wrote: "It was embarrassing having damnyankees as allies but, I must say damnable convenient at the time. The Yankees are sturdy fighters and they'll be hard to beat."

Of the 3,600 Confederates who had marched north from Fort Bliss, Texas, only 1,200 returned, but the Stars and Bars continued to fly over Santa Fe, which was claimed as part of Texas by the South. In fact, any territory north or east of the Rio Grande River was considered Texas, despite the fact that in 1846 during the Mexican War, General Stephen Watts Kearny had taken possession of Santa Fe and New Mexico for the Union.

Jesse James was a strange mixture of man. He once almost shed tears at Leadville, Colorado, when drunken railroad workers massacred a dozen or so Chinese coolies, who couldn't speak English. He paid the conductor on the spot to take them aboard the train and get them out of the state. Yet this same man right after World War I helped round up a group of IWW's (Wobblies) near Bingham Canyon, Utah, judged and then executed them. "There were about fifty of these Bolshevik bastards," old Jesse recalled, "and we lured them into a remote spot. But we tried them first. The members of The Organization asked each Wobbly to speak his piece and every one of them denounced everything the United States had ever fought or stood for. When they wouldn't dig their own common grave, my boys dug it. Then we shot them down like dogs, covered them with dirt and forgot about it. Nobody witnessed it but members of The Organization and they never talked."

And Jesse was a mean opponent when pushed. He was right in the middle of the Johnson County Cattle War in northern Wyoming in 1892. Jesse had purchased what he named the Shamrock Ranch along Crazy Woman Creek in 1874 or 1875. In 1879 the town of Buffalo was founded. It was situated northwest of his holdings. With the opening of Sioux country, cattlemen, nesters, miners and freighters broke over the region in a wave.

By 1892 the big ranchers like Jesse were alarmed by the farmers who built fences and the Johnson County nesters and small ranchers who prepared for an early roundup. On Page 274 of Wyoming in the American Guide Series it is stated: "This in effect would have nullified the stock growers' protective legislation, which set definite dates for all roundups and provided State brand inspectors to oversee branding and marking...the big cattlemen organized a society called the Regulators and planned an expedition in military style, to settle the trouble by hanging or shooting the known rustlers and frightening their friends out of Wyoming. They hired gunmen from Texas, Idaho, and Colorado and placed a former army officer in command."

The former army officer was the old Confederate colonel, Jesse Woodson James. The hired gunmen included such stalwarts as the Sundance Kid, Ora Doiel, Tim Capps, Dr. John James and Kentucky Dr. Frank James. With Colonel James calling the shots, the telegraph wires to Buffalo and Sheridan were cut and the "army" rolled north from Gasper. At the K C Ranch, 50 miles south of Buffalo, they killed two suspects, Mick Ray and Nate Champion, and "marched" on Buffalo.

But Sheriff Red Angus (an unusual last name for a cattle country lawman) swore in a hundred deputies and Buffalo citizens mobilized. Colonel Van Horn of Ft. McKinney brought the "war" to a screaming halt. After legal manoeuvring, all charges were dropped against Jesse's Regulators, but U.S. troopers stayed in Buffalo until tempers cooled. "We won the Johnson County Cattle War because we put squatters and nesters on notice and they kept in line," Jesse recalled.

As chief of the Inner Sanctum of The Knights of the Golden Circle, Jesse was one of the most powerful men in America. The Golden Circle had industrial as well as military spies on both sides of the Atlantic. Its agents were always on the lookout for inventions with a military application which might help the South in the Second Civil War - if and when. Because of his excellent education, being able to speak five or six major languages plus a dozen Indian tongues, his constant traveling both here and abroad and his pleasant personality, Jesse was able to make friends easily with important people.

One of Jesse's friends was Colonel Frank Mayer. The colonel was a prop. Mayer, a native of Louisiana had served as a drummer boy in the Union Army during the Civil War. He did not know of Jesse's connection with the Golden Circle, but he knew he was a very wealthy man on the lookout for worthwhile inventions.

A young inventor, Thomas A. Edison (1847-1931), three years younger than Jesse, had opened his own shop in New Jersey in 1876, but wasn't an instant success. He needed

money, as most inventors do. In 1877 or 1878, Edison, whose hearing had been impaired by a severe attack of scarlet fever, scraped together the last of his savings to attend an exhibit in France. The Europeans laughed at some of his prized inventions and Edison was broke and discouraged.

One night at a reception in Paris, Edison met Colonel Mayer and told him his tale of woe. Mayer said, "Well, you need help. First, you need to get the hell back across the Atlantic and next you need some financial backing. I know a man named Colonel Bob Carr, who will help you.

"I'll pay your passage back to New York and your train fare to Wyoming. You want to go to Buffalo in the north part of the state and then to the Shamrock Ranch southeast of the town. Colonel Carr is a very busy man. He travels a lot and has far-flung business interests, but you wait for him at the ranch. At least you won't starve to death. I'll give you a letter to give him." Edison, who had probably not been west of the Mississippi, made the long trek to the wilds of Wyoming and was delighted to find a shrewd, but sympathetic listener in Colonel Carr. After spending several days and nights talking, Carr gave the inventor an unknown amount of funds.

The men became lifelong friends and on trips to New York, Colonel Carr would stop off at Menlo Park. Following the St. Joseph hoax, Colonel Carr revealed himself as Jesse James and Edison kept his mouth shut. On one visit, Edison, who loved baseball, became involved in a sandlot game. Jesse hit a long fly, tossing away his bat as he ran. The bat hit Edison, who was catching, on the head and the Wizard of Menlo Park became much deafer as a result.

But the two men developed another way of "talking." Jesse III said, "They'd sit and tap each other's knees in telegraph code, stopping now and then to gesture, smile or laugh."

Both men were interested in the supernatural and the psychic. Jesse had "second sight" and Edison could "rock tables." Edison's mother and father were both spiritualists and he had attended many séances as a small boy. Jesse told the inventor about the amazing Mother Rebecca, who was still alive, and the two men planned to visit her, but something always came up to postpone it.

Edison told Jesse about his desire to invent a machine which could pick up voices from "spirits on the Other Side." He explained, "It would take the place of a medium. If I can only bring in vibrations, I believe I can record the voices." It is unclear if Thomas Edison ever invented anything which the Golden Circle experts or Jesse thought might have a military application, but they did make money by buying stock in corporations which purchased Edison's patents.

Jesse James III said, "When Edison died in 1931, Grandpa looked me up in Illinois and cried like a baby, saying, 'Why Tom was three years younger than I am - he was too young to die. He was the hardest working man I ever knew. He'd sleep only three or four hours a night and wake up fresh as a daisy.'"

But Edison's engineers did help iron out the bugs in the Wright Brothers' "flying machine," which the Confederate Underground was interested in.

During the Civil War, the Confederates, like the Yankees, had a Balloon Observation Corps. A young Rebel captain named Rogers experimented with balloons which could carry explosives, believing such a weapon, if perfected could be used to destroy ships and buildings as well as troops. The problem was that if the balloon flew too low it was a sitting duck for Yankee rifle bullets and if the balloon was too high Captain Rogers' "bombs" would fall far off target. But Captain Rogers achieved some measure of success on moonless nights, although artillery officers claimed they could guarantee a greater firepower with much better efficiency.

But Rogers, a Golden Circle agent, fervently believed in delivering bombs from the air and predicted, "The day will come when neither cities, forts nor ships will be safe from airborne bombs." Little did he know!

In 1896, Rogers heard about two brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who had opened a bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, but who had started to work on a "flying machine." After purchasing a bicycle for a grandson, the agent found the brothers more than willing to talk about their project.

Golden Circle spies had forwarded reports from European inventors who were making progress along the same lines. After digesting the European plans for a week, Rogers made a report to the Golden Circle. "With your permission, I want to make the European plans available to the Americans, Orville and Wilbur Wright. If this flying machine can be developed, think of the advantage the South will have if war comes. We could fly right over an enemy target and drop explosives and not have to fuss around trying to guide a hot air balloon over a Yankee target by the use of ropes or wires."

Jesse recommended the Golden Circle appropriate \$50,000 in payments of \$5,000 each to the Wright brothers. As usual, the checks would be written on a Golden Circle front corporation.

After the short flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C., Orville Wright told the Golden Circle agent, "Some day there will be a flying machine which will fly from New York to San Francisco in a mere 12 hours - you wait and see!"

Despite Orville's prediction, the brothers became discouraged by the small acceptance of their aviation efforts in this country and went to France. Actually, the Kitty Hawk event had only proved a principle of flight, certainly not its application or practicability. When Captain Rogers pleaded for more funds, he received Jesse's backing, but the Inner/Sanctum urged a "wait and see policy." One old man, a former Confederate general, said, "In 1803 or 1804 an Englishman built a steam-powered bus which actually carried passengers down the streets of London, but it is only now, a century later, that the automobile is beginning to catch on. The flying machine, too, may be a century away

from fruition.

Jesse recalled four decades later, "We made a mistake in not granting further money to the Wrights because the airplane was already proving its worth in World War I and Hitler and Hirohito both proved airplanes could sink battleships, bomb cities and kill troops. In 1909, I believe it was, the U.S. Government broke down and paid \$30,000 for a Wright-built plane. Edison never took any credit for helping the Wright brothers - he didn't need to. He had more than 400 patents in his lifetime."

The Knights of the Golden Circle during its more vigorous days when ex-Confederate officers were young did not always agree completely on any given proposal. Minority reports and parliamentary manoeuvring were not uncommon. In the 1870s Golden Circle business several times took young Jesse to Washington. The secret group had many members in the House and Senate.

Jesse recalled, "We had an older Golden Circle member who was a senator and quite interested in what he called the pathetic case of John Augustus Sutter. As you know, gold had been discovered at Sutter's Mill in California in 1848 and miners just overran his property, taking what they wanted. Sutter was demanding compensation from the Congress.

"So this senator had me talk to old Sutter and once Sutter found I spoke fluent German I had a hard time avoiding him after that. Perhaps he had a just claim, but from talking to him it appeared to me he was a strange man in a strange land. He would have done better to have stayed in Switzerland and operated a small shop. He was a phony, too, claiming to have served in Napoleon's army. He even brought his phony Napoleonic uniform to California.

"Old Sutter was a pathetic joke. He mistrusted both Mexicans and Americans. He spoke broken English and broken Spanish - I tried my Spanish on him. Old Sutter didn't have the guts or the vision to hack it in the New World. I guess he thought he could keep the discovery of gold a secret from the world - well, he failed.

"Old Sutter could never understand mineral rights. A farmer and rancher is interested in what's on top of the ground. The Wright brothers were interested in what was in the air. Miners are interested in what's below the ground. Without mineral rights, the Old West would have never developed."

Yes, Jesse W. James could thank Congress for mineral rights. He hit it big in the Texas oilfields. He drilled wildcat wells with ancient type (modern in that day) cable tool drilling rigs, hitting at Spindletop, Sour Lake, Breckenridge, Burk Burnett, Iowa Park, Ranger, Desdemona (Hogtown), Mexia and Coleman County. He also struck oil in Wyoming, Montana and Oklahoma. And at Signal Hill and Kettleman Hills in California. Before he died, Jesse said, "There's a hell of a lot more oil still under America than has ever been brought out."

His gold mines throughout the West brought him millions of dollars - when gold was selling for around \$14 an ounce. He found and developed rich coal deposits in Colorado and zinc, lead, and copper in other areas.

How much copper? Was Jesse W. James the copper king of the world? Or was William A. Clark (or W. A. Clark) the copper king? Were Jesse and Clark the same man? One of the aliases Jesse used was William A. Clark. Did he steal U.S. Senator William A. dark's name without Clark knowing it? Did Jesse take his children and grandchildren every summer to the William A. Clark Mansion on Granite Street in Butte, Montana, with Clark's permission? Or were Jesse and Clark the same man?

Or were there two W. A. Clarks? I have in my possession three photographs of "Senator William A. Clark" from the Montana Historical Society which greatly resemble Jesse Woodson James. On his deathbed, old Jesse admitted he was William A. Clark, the copper king.

James O. Howk, a son of Jesse's twin sister, Matilda, who was alive in 1965 and living in Arizona, said that he and his two brothers, Elmer and Bill, all worked "for many years for Senator William A. Clark, the copper king, with the full knowledge that he was our uncle, Jesse W. James." And old white-haired Carl O. Clark, Box 86, Death Valley, California, who died in 1967 in his 90s, admitted, "For many years I served as Jesse W. James' double as copper king William A. Clark in Montana, Arizona and Utah." Carl O. Clark also told Sarah Vaughn (James) Snow, author of "This Was Frank James," that he was her half-brother, admitting he was the illegitimate son of Alexander Franklin James, old Jesse's Missouri-born first cousin.

In my encyclopaedia, Jesse W. James rates a whole page, while Senator William A. Clark is accorded three inches. It says that William Andrews Clark, capitalist and politician, was born in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, January 8, 1839. After studying law at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, he drove a team of oxen to Montana where he became copper king of the world. Clark was a fanatical Democrat (so was Jesse James) and after three tries he was elected to the U.S. Senate and served 1901-1907. He died March 2, 1925.

James family records show that Jesse W. James, accompanied by his daughter, Gertie Clark, went to England in the spring of 1925 and stayed a year. Gertie Clark had married a remittance man from England named Dee Murphy and Jesse built her a 90-room mansion in the Liverpool, England, area. James family members saw Dee Murphy, 60 pounds lighter and divorced from Gertie, in the State of Ohio in the middle 1960s. Although W. A. Clark (Jesse) was extremely fond of his daughter, Gertie, he left England because she tried to make him over into a British gentleman. "Hell's fire," snorted Jesse, "my ancestors left England in 1607 because they couldn't stand being English gentlemen!"

Who was buried in W. A. dark's grave in March of 1925? Need we remind you that the James Clan and the Golden Circle were quite adept at fake funerals.

In 1917, one of Senator Clark's own newspapers in Montana quoted him as saying, "I would rather flood my mines than recognize the union." Clark claimed he hadn't really said that. He would sign with the union, but not with the IWWs (Wobblies) who controlled it. So William A. Clark hated the Wobblies. Jesse W. James hated the Wobblies enough to execute fifty of them in Utah a year later.

On his second try for the U.S. Senate, William A. Clark was elected in 1899, but 21 members of the Montana Legislature sent a memorial to Congress charging that Clark had bought votes. Both his election and subsequent appointment were declared invalid. Does this sound like something Jesse James might be charged with?

When Jesse James returned from England in 1926, his grandsons asked him if he was headed for Butte to spend the summer. The old man replied, "I'm finished with the William A. Clark charade for good in Butte. Never could stand those damn winters up there. And with Gertie settled in England, I'm through with Butte."

"How'd you become W. A. Clark in the first place?" Jesse III asked.

"How'd I get my other names - I was still hot. Murder is an open charge, my boy. To answer your question, why, Frank and I were running a freight line and doing some trading up in Montana. Then I went digging for gold in Butte. Found some, too, but more important, I came upon a great copper vein on my claim. Frank and I had been operating the freight line as the Clark brothers. Being a Southerner, I always preferred initials to first names so I took the name of W. A. Clark.

"Well, sir, some financial writers came out from New York. You know how I am around reporters or writers. I just backed off. One asked me where I was from and I mumbled, 'Pennsylvania.' That's all I told them. Either they talked to another miner with an imagination or they went back and made it up. I was real surprised to learn I'd attended some college in Iowa I'd never heard of and driving a team of oxen from Iowa to Montana would be one hell of a slow way to travel. But that's the way the legend grew and became a part of history, I guess."

Old Jesse repeated the above statement on his death bed. Why would a man ready to cash in his chips lie? In 1926, Jesse also told his grandson: "Remember Bob Ford, the little jockey who supposedly shot me in St. Jo in 1882? Well, Bob never killed anybody and he wasn't killed by some idiot named O'Kelly at Creed, Colorado, in 1892. His cousin from Missouri, A. B. Ford, who was a 6 foot tall 'double*' for little Ford, was the one killed. Little Bob Ford was my comptroller for years when I was copper king of the world. Of course, he used an assumed name. His son was elected governor of Montana. There would be no earthly reason for even telling you boys the family name the Fords assumed. Bob Ford's grandson lives in the small hamlet of Rose Hills, Iowa. Bob Ford lies buried in Georgetown, Texas. On more than one occasion, my comptroller Bob Ford would say, 'I'm sure glad you're W. A. Clark - I've grown to dislike that Jesse James!'"

"My alias, William A. Clark, damned near proved my undoing," old Jesse recalled in the 1940s. "Being Copper King and a U.S. Senator were just too much fame for me. Everywhere I went, reporters or financial writers were at my heels, suspecting a gigantic big business venture. I had created a financial monster. I was never comfortable with the name, William A. Clark, and I was damn glad to kill him off and 'bury' him in 1925."

For five years I worked on a metropolitan Los Angeles newspaper for Charles C. Cohan, who had been one of Senator Clark's editors on his Butte newspaper. Cohan, a remarkable old man with a keen mind and sharp sense of humor, died in 1971 at a purported age of 92.

Cohan talked about Butte at every opportunity. He was always mystified by W. A. Clark, whom he called "The Senator." Cohan said, "The Senator was a very mysterious man. He had piercing blue eyes - the kind you don't easily forget. His voice was gentle. The Senator's chief rivals were Marcus Daly and Augustus F. Heinze, who were much more outgoing than The Senator.

"On his third try, The Senator was elected to the U.S. Senate, but I heard he had the worst record for absenteeism in the Congress. Don't know where in hell he spent his time because he wasn't around Butte too much either. He had mining and other interests all over the West. Of course, he had the big mine at Jerome, Arizona, and his staff always said he was in Jerome. But I once talked to a reporter from Arizona and down there they thought he spent all his time in Butte. He was a mysterious man.

"The Senator was extremely fond of his daughter, Gertie. I don't know if he got along well with his son, W. A., Jr., or not. When I wrote the Montana State Song and received a prize, The Senator congratulated me about six months later.

"There was another oddity about The Senator. He was partial to foreign workers who couldn't speak English and he employed a lot of Negroes, Mexicans and Indian half-breeds, as I recall. Legend was that The Senator paid them the going wage and declared, 'These people deserve a chance.' Of course, such practices didn't set too well with workers who considered themselves oldtime Americans."

Charlie would sit and rock awhile and furiously chew gum. The doctor had made him quit smoking and his wife forbade him to drink. Then he'd continue, "On one occasion I had to see The Senator on something important so I went up to the Clark Mansion on Granite Street. The coldest-mannered English butler I ever met came to the door and stiffly said, 'I'm sorry, sir, The Senator is detained out of state.'

"But The Senator did have a sense of humour. One time I was at the railroad station to greet an arriving dignitary. A train had just come in from the east and a Slovakian miner, who had worked in The Senator's mines for about a year, had sent for his mother. When she arrived, the miner embraced his mother and then tried to flaunt his knowledge of English. He cried, 'Velcome, mama, goddam it to hell, mama, velcome!' The Senator was waiting nearby for a train to carry him east. I looked over and Senator Clark was having a

hearty laugh."

Working closely with Cohan for five years, I learned a great deal about early Montana history. One day the talk got around to bad men of the West. Charlie said, "Hell, most of them hit Butte at one time or other. It was a cultural as well as economic center. There was money around, too. Why, one day a drunk busted into my office with a wild tale that Jesse James hadn't been shot in 1882 and was actually living in Butte.

"I tried to reason with him and draw him out. But the guy stopped short of admitting he rode with Jesse and Frank's gang, but the implication was strong. He kept repeating that he had positively seen Jesse James leave a Butte bank the day before. I tried to make a joke and asked, 'How was he carrying the money?' I like to have people laugh at my jokes, but this guy was a sourpuss. He kept insisting he'd seen Jesse James. I finally said, 'I think you're a wanted outlaw if you knew Jesse James that well. I'm going to call the sheriff and have him check you out.' I reached for my phone and the guy vanished."

Had the drifter actually seen Jesse W. James, alias Senator William A. Clark? Weren't these two mysterious men actually one?

And then there's Jesse James III's claim, "As a kid I visited Senator Clark's Mansion on Granite Street in Butte five summers in a row. Jesse certainly hadn't spared any expense. It was befitting the world's copper king. All the servants called him, 'Senator Clark', but we kids knew damn well it was our grandfather, Jesse James."

In his book, "Sixty Years in Southern California," Harris Newmark reports that Senator William A. Clark and his brother, J. Ross Clark, opened a sugar beet processing plant at Alamitos, California, in 1897." Wasn't J. Ross Clark really Dr. Sylvester Franklin (Frank) James? Hadn't "Bill and Ross Clark" first operated as "the Clark Brothers" in Montana?

Each year millions of visitors flock into the gambling capital of Las Vegas, Nevada, unmindful that Clark county, Nevada, was after William A. Clark. Jesse James (or Clark) spent a great deal of time in early-day Las Vegas and had many investments there.

The trail of Jesse James, alias William A. Clark, grows warm in the most unusual circumstances. On October 31, 1972, I was having lunch at the California Club with a long time friend, attorney Jerry D. Barnum, of the highly respected Los Angeles law firm of Cosgrove, Cramer, Rindge & Barnum.

Somehow the talk drifted to the late Senator Clark and Jerry volunteered, "You know, old Judge Cosgrove represented him in Southern California. One of the first jobs the Judge gave me when I joined the firm was to burn the William A. Clark papers, which were quite extensive as I look back thirty years."

I decided to toss Barnum a mind-boggier. "What would you say, counsel," I asked, "if I told you that your late partner, Judge Cosgrove, visited his client, William A. Clark, at his Van Nuys, California, home in late 1948?"

Barnum blinked. "Why, my friend, I would say you were off by twenty-some years. I was associated with Judge Cosgrove's firm in 1948. I believe Clark died in 1925. That's why the Judge had me burn Clark's papers - he was dead."

There was no way of summoning Judge Cosgrove to the witness stand because the noted attorney had died in the summer of 1955, but sometime in my conversations with Jesse James III the name of Judge Cosgrove had come up along with two other of his grandfather's lawyers in the West, J. Andrew West (Arizona) and C. V. Mead (Denver). All three lawyers are now dead.

Following my lunch with Barnum, I telephone Jesse III and asked him for the full details on Judge Cosgrove's visit to Grandpa Jesse's home in 1948 after the old man's "emergence."

"I remember it quite well," Jesse III replied, "because people were pouring in and out of the house all day. Grandpa had a long and extensive background in Southern California. Late one afternoon Grandpa said, 'An old friend, in fact, my old attorney, Judge Cosgrove, is coming out to visit me tonight, Lee. Be sure that he gets in to see me.'

"Grandpa was then 104 and slowly dying. I protested that he needed his rest, but the strong-willed old man insisted -I lost more arguments than I ever won with him in the last years. It was after dark when Mr. Cosgrove arrived. I ushered him right into the bedroom.

"Mr. Cosgrove went over to the bed and grabbed Grandpa's hand and said, 'Jesse, you old rascal.' Then Grandpa looked up and said to me, 'Lee, I'd like to be alone with the Judge for a few moments.'

"Actually, the Judge and Grandpa were closeted four hours. After Mr. Cosgrove left, I asked Grandpa what they'd had to talk about for so long. He smiled and replied, 'Old times, Lee. The Judge and I have many, many memories.'

A week later, Jesse III recalled that Cosgrove returned with a Superior Court Judge. Cosgrove went in and talked to old Jesse James for about fifteen minutes and then came out and took the jurist into the bedroom.

"It was another closed-door session," Jesse III said, "but this one lasted only about two hours. After they'd gone, Grandpa waved a wad of bills at me and commanded, 'Take care of this for me, Lee.' I asked him where he'd got the money and he replied, 'From Judge Cosgrove for coffee money, Lee.'

"I mildly bawled him out while I counted out two-thousand dollars. 'With all your money,' I said sarcastically, 'you seem to be getting more stingy and miserly by the minute.' Grandpa replied, 'The Judge just loaned it to me. After all, I paid him thousands and thousands of dollars in legal fees through the years when I was William A. Clark.'

Jesse III reports he asked his grandfather, "Did Judge Cosgrove know you were Jesse James?"

The old outlaw replied, "You damn right he did. I told him after I found I could trust him. Not all my lawyers knew, but Judge Cosgrove did and he never let out a peep. You must remember that W. A. Clark was a real rich and famous man and the Judge was happy to number me among his clients."

Attorney Barnum admits his late partner, Judge Cosgrove, had many prominent Los Angeles tycoons as clients, including the late publisher, Harry Chandler, and M. J. Connell, a Western capitalist.

Jesse III said, "As William A. Clark, old Jesse knew Mr. Chandler quite well, just like he had known Senator George Hearst, William Randolph Hearst's father. And Mr. Connell was a former Clark partner. I don't know if they were in Montana, Arizona and Utah copper together, but Mr. Connell's name popped up many times. They were in borax together and owned a couple of stage lines which later became bus lines - and they were pioneers in the old San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad.

"As a young lawyer, Mr. Cosgrove may have handled the legalities when Grandpa sold his interest in Los Angeles Railways (street cars) to Henry E. Huntington, the late railroad magnate and philanthropist. Grandpa was an investor in the first electrically-powered street cars which began running on Los Angeles streets in 1885.

"Huntington and Grandpa were both railroad men. They held interests in various lines, some secret and some out in the open. It was quite a jig-saw puzzle and this is probably why Grandpa always said he had employed fifty top lawyers in his lifetime, but never let any of them know the full scope of his vast business empire.

"Myself, I was interested in oil, but not particularly in railroading. Grandpa recalled many cases in the early days of his Western mining and railroad ventures when lawsuits took place where he had partners on both sides of a hearing or trial. He'd say, 'It was kind of comfortable, Lee, to sit there in the courtroom knowing I was paying lawyers on both sides. How could I lose? And in many cases, I had already juiced (bought) the judge who sat there listening to my lawyers drone on.'

"Some historians claim Western railroading was just one big cartel. Nothing could be further from the truth - competition was very fierce and at times bloody. I'm the first to admit there were lots of crooked dealings and I never took a back seat to anybody when it came to manipulations or intrigue. But the railroads were essential in the development of the West. No particular gun won the West as the saying goes - the railroads won the West, my boy! "

Two oldtimers who knew Jesse James for many years as "Senator William A. Clark" were Carl "Shorty" Wallin and Dr. John Samuel, alias Eddy Lane in Texas and Eddy Slade in Wyoming. Wallin, a World War I hero, former champion bull rider, horse trainer

and "cowboy artist," knew Jesse James for almost fifty years. I have several hundred letters from the colourful Wallin, whose death was reported in the Billings, Montana, Gazette, on April 13, 1972.

While Wallin never got into trouble, the same cannot be said of Dr. Samuel. Remember Zerelda Samuel, the mother of Missouri Frank and Jesse James? One of her husbands was Dr. Rueben Samuel, who fathered John Samuel, making him a half brother of Missouri Jesse and Frank James.

Wallin, who knew Dr. John Samuel for half a century, said Zerelda's son was born "in either 1861 or 1862 and died in Wyoming in 1960." History relates that John Samuel, who had a long nose like his mother, Zerelda, was killed at a country dance in the Kearney, Missouri, area in his early 20s.

During a reunion in Montana in 1955 with Shorty Wallin and Jesse James III, Dr. Samuel again told what really happened in Kearney. "In the 1880s the last name of James was quite controversial in Missouri. You had both enemies and friends. No, the Kearney incident wasn't staged. Some guy got shot deader than hell, but it was reported that I had been killed. My half brother, Frank, sent me to Cousin Jesse's place in Colorado."

Recognizing John as a bright young man, his outlaw cousin dispatched him to Vanderbilt University where he earned his medical degree. After graduation, John went to Vienna and Germany for further study with Colonel James footing the bill.

Upon his return to America, the restless young doctor, not yet 30, headed West and became associated with his cousin, Jesse, in various enterprises. He became a specialist in gunshot wounds and found a lucrative practice treating members of the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang, The Wild Bunch and other gunmen.

For a couple of decades, according to Wallin, Dr. Samuel headed the medical staffs employed by "Senator Clark" in his Butte, Montana, and Jerome, Superior, Bisbee and Douglas, Arizona, mining operations.

When Pancho Villa was making his bid for power in Mexico, Jesse James sent Dr. Samuel to the Mexican outlaw's headquarters. Again, his speciality in treating gunshot wounds and probing for stubborn bullets was put to good use. Samuel recalled, "Pancho paid me at the end of each day, saying there might not be a manana!"

Dr. Samuel's hobby was engraving and he designed "Pancho Villa money" and Jesse James employed him in producing stock and bond certificates. In later years, the doctor smiled and refused to say whether they were bogus or genuine.

Although Jesse James III had heard the story many times from his outlawed grandfather, Dr. Samuel and Wallin rehashed the circumstances of Senator dark's "death" during the reunion.

The doctor was quoted as saying, "The Senator was up to his neck in the Teapot Dome mess in 1924 and another scandal was brewing involving Nevada mining and railroad stock.

"Three of us, Shorty Wallin, comptroller Bob Ford and I, had a serious talk with The Senator one night in Butte. The Senator, who was worried, said, 'I've been involved in scandals before, but as Senator Clark I'm big potatoes. The government will really dig in this one and I could end up with a rope around my neck when they learn I'm Jesse James, wanted for murder on more than a few accounts.'

"So I asked The Senator, 'Well, Jesse, what would you have done in the good old days?'

"He looked at me with those sharp blue eyes and replied, 'Hell, I'd stage a fake funeral.'

"Bob Ford spoke up and said, 'Dr. Samuel here can sign the death certificate or knows a doctor who can and you just happen to own an undertaking parlor right here in Butte. So what the hell you waiting for, Jesse?'

"Thus the world was to learn of the death of the famous capitalist, Senator Clark, on March 2, 1925. It was easy. No muss; no fuss. More important, Jesse James lived to fight another day."

Dr. Samuel as Eddy Slade hooked up with Tom Pendergast's political machine during its heyday in Kansas City and Pendergast valued him so highly he bought Slade an "armoured" Chrysler sedan which cost \$35,000 to custom build.

Slade's big private vice was gambling. He was a high roller and seemed to gravitate to where money was plentiful. He became a familiar sight in the East Texas oilfields and was arrested several times. The fourth time he was convicted he was sent to Texas State Prison in 1945 or 1946 for five years.

While serving at Otay Prison Farm in Brazoria County, Texas, he developed a bad case of "jungle rot" along with some other inmates. Doctors believed the prisoners became infected from wearing old combat boots worn by U.S. forces in the South Pacific. The infection spread almost up to Samuel's knees and he was bothered with it until his death in 1960.

In 1955 Dr. Samuel recalled, "When those prison gates swung open I got to hell out of Texas real fast for two reasons. First, I wasn't too welcome in the Lone Star State and then I found Wyoming a more beneficial climate for jungle rot than Texas."

Although Dr. Samuel had never been a member of The Knights of the Golden Circle he learned a great deal about it from his two half brothers and Colonel James - but kept the secrets well.

Jesse III said, "Dr. Samuel in 1955 really let his hair down and we had several long talks

about my grandfather's many aliases, his enterprises and the fantastic Confederate Underground. I was amazed at how much the old man really knew. Although he was past 90, his mind was crystal clear and his memory keen."

In trying to run down secret information on Senator William Andrews Clark, I found that the Confederacy yet lives in the minds of sons and grandsons of men who fought for the Stars and Bars. No, they don't believe in slavery, but they insist their ancestors' cause was just and they retain an inherent distrust of damnyankees.

As a veteran newsman, attribution had been drilled into me. When I was a cub reporter, an eagle-eyed city editor scanned my first story and barked, "Just a minute, son, whoinhell said this? The paper didn't say it, I didn't say it and by God you can't say it. Attribute those damn quotes!"

Living in comfortable retirement in Southern California is a long-time intimate of "Senator Clark," who would talk, but refused me the right to use his name. When I spent four hours talking with him in his living room I had two strikes against me. First, I carried a paid-membership card in The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, which branded me as a damnyankee. And the sharp old man in his late 80s who sat erect across the table from me was a former newspaper reporter. Newsmen seldom interview each other. Barbers give each other haircuts, but they're used to it. Newsmen aren't.

He finally allowed me to use his alias, "Jack Longley." He had worked as a bronc buster for the vast Miller and Lux ranches which stretched from Mexico to Canada. He had been a cattle buyer, a food processor, a confidante of Old West badmen and a close friend of diminutive Sheriff John Slaughter of Cochise County, Arizona. Longley's father was a Confederate officer and a member of the lofty Knights of the Golden Circle and his maternal grandfather was a Southern colonel. Longley's brown eyes burned in fierce pride: "His Georgia Black Horse Cavalry never surrendered, sir!"

Although well educated, keen of mind and articulate, Longley spiced his talk with salty phrases from the Wild West era. I had primed myself for the interview (which he was reluctant to give) with unpublished and little known facts about the secret life of Jesse Woodson James.

I shook him up several times but he came gamely back with a thrust answering every parry. We fenced for a half hour while he gave me his background. Then he said I could use the information, but could not use his real name. These were his conditions. When he wouldn't bargain further, I accepted his terms. The information checked out - Long-ley left a trail which was easy to follow. He plugged a lot of historical holes for me.

"To begin with, " Longley said, "let me give you my definition of the history of the West. Generally, it's the corroded imagination of some jackass writer. I have no desire to drag old bodies from the grave, to reopen old wounds or to harm innocent people. So now you ask your questions and I'll soon tell you if I'll answer them."

Did you know Jesse W. James was Senator William A. Clark?

"Hell, yes, I knew that for a fact. I lived with that knowledge. I also knew Jesse as Ben Clark, Edgar Clark, E. W. Clark, W. H. Clark and as Hank Moffat (Mofitt, Moffatt and Moffet). And at times he was Ben Castairs, Charles Langdon and Ben Lompoc. If I thought real hard, I could probably think of another dozen or so of Old Jesse's aliases."

When did you first meet Jesse James?

"I first met him back in the 1890s when he came to my Dad's ranch, a sanctuary on the old Buscadero Trail, which was like the Hoot Owl Trails down South. When I first shook his hand, Jesse was using the name Ben Clark. With him on that trip were Tim Capps and Manuel Ortena.

"Before Dad passed on, he told me that Ben Clark was a distant cousin because our relatives in Georgia, the Barnhills and the Cramers, had married into the Clark (James) family. Eventually, I met at least three of Ben Clark's brothers - Frank, Morgan and Levi - of course, their real last name was James. The Kentucky Jameses, if you please."

Did you ever meet Senator Clark's daughter, Gertie?

"You mean Gertie Flournoy?"

No, Gertie Clark, who married Dee Murphy from England. "Well, she was a widow when she married Dee Murphy. Her husband by the name of Flournoy had been killed in the Sunshine Mine at Kellogg, Idaho."

Describe Dee Murphy and what was he doing in America?

"Well, sir, he was the third son of some British duke. I understand as of 1972 he was living in Ohio and Gertie was back in England living in the mansion her father, The Senator, built her near Liverpool."

How about the question I asked?

"Oh, of course. Dee Murphy was about 6' 2", kind of gangling like. Went on an occasional binge. He was representing a British syndicate composed of Queen Victoria, the Duke of Marlborough and other dukes and viscounts. They bought the Kern Land Company and many other Western properties. After Murphy married Gertie he wasn't exactly hurting for money because her father gave her a \$30 million trust fund."

When did you next meet Senator Clark?

"It was in 1904 and I had a job hauling sugar beets to the Senator's refinery located about half way between Santa Ana and Newport Beach in Orange County, California. The Senator's brother, J. Ross Clark, was his partner. Some thought Ross was Frank James,

but it was really Morgan James, his brother. I saw the Senator once or twice at the refinery. He was restless - traveled all the time." When was the next time you met him?

"Let's put it this way. I finally learned that Clark and Jesse W. James were definitely the same man in 1910. I'd drifted back to the Midwest and went to work busting broncot for Pop Montgomery on his ranch south of Clayton, Oklahoma. Montgomery told me that my father, who had been a Confederate surgeon, had sewed him up when he was wounded. I had several long bull sessions with Pop and he admitted having been Quantrill's adjutant. Then he said his real name was Ben Travis and was a cousin of Quantrill, whose real name was Travis, of course. Pop also told me the story of the 1882 St. Jo hoax and that there were two Jesse Jameses and two Frank Jameses."

How did you react?

"React? Hell, I kept my mouth shut, son. I had heard smatterings of this best-kept secret from those who traveled the old Buscadero Trail - where you could get a fresh horse every forty miles or so if you knew the password."

So you last saw Senator Clark in 1904 in California then?

"Are you kidding? Hell, I saw him many times out West, but not really to talk to him. I fought in World War I so let's jump ahead to 1920 when I spent some time with Clark on his Wiscom Ranch south of Ellensburg, Washington. I saw him again in 1922 at El Centre in the Imperial Valley of California. In 1924 I spent a day or two with him in Carson City, Nevada. That man was all over - always on the move." When was the first time Senator Clark admitted to you he was the old outlaw, Jesse W. James?

"It was in 1927 when I was buying cattle around Haverlock, Montana. We were at his Bull's Creek Ranch. There was a touch of frost on the ground and we were drinking hot toddies. He got loaded and really let his hair down to me. He rambled on and on. Told me how he got the powder burns on his chin, about his experiences in The War Between the States and how he had tried several times to emerge as Jesse James - the whole bit. He said he made very few appearances in the U.S. Senate because he had too many business interests.

"Then he came right out and said, 'Godammit, I am Jesse Woodson James, the guy Bob Ford never killed in '82.' The next day he was kind of worried about blabbing so much so I said, 'Don't worry. I got a poor memory.' He smiled and said, 'That's fine.' Why would Clark, one of the world's richest men, want to pose as the outlawed Jesse James if he wasn't?"

What were some of the other things you learned about Clark?

"Well, he was tighter than hell with a buck. He was sharp at business and he always carried large amounts of cash wherever he went and I never heard about anybody robbing him. Before St. Jo, Jesse had been disturbed because petty crooks often used his name

when pulling a job. Then he told me the saga of Ben Lompoc, one of his aliases, and how Ben Lompoc was 'buried'. It seems Lompoc in 1918 got in a scrape and killed two deputy sheriffs and a county judge in Dakota. Friends hastily 'buried' Lompoc near Fort Bu-ford and nobody knew the real culprit was Jesse James. 'There are some advantages to being declared legally dead,' Jesse would smile."

Once the ice was broken, did you become pretty close to Clark and/or Jesse?

"I'd say so. I used to call him 'Willie' for William Clark. A personal tragedy struck me in 1929 and he and I went on a three-day drunk out in the hills of Wyoming. He was pretty sympathetic.

"I got to know most of Jesse's old Negro friends. 'Little Charlie' Smith, who in 1973 was living in Bartow, Florida, and was billed as the oldest man in the country at 131, I'd met at the Two Dot Ranch in Montana and at Freeport, Illinois. And there was Big Charlie and the grand old bareknuckle fighter, John Trammell. One thing about Willie Clark. He always surrounded himself with the very best men - white, black, Indian or Mexican.

"Jesse W. James was a natural-born killer. If you crossed him, he'd begin hating you and would eventually cut you off from your appetite. He brooked no interference. He could charm you out of your socks. He was a hell of a great promoter, but he had a wicked temper. He became enraged at me one time in the Parker Hotel in Denver and I sat on him until he got over his tantrum. Later, when he'd cooled down he smiled and said, 'You SOB, you were getting heavy on my stomach!"

"Some claim that Jesse was the deadliest man who ever walked the earth. I don't agree. I think his cousin, Bob Dalton, held that dubious title. Bob would kill you 'cold turkey'. He'd shoot first and wouldn't even bother to ask questions later. Many of the bloody crimes blamed on Missouri Jesse (Dingus) James were done by Bob Dalton, who just enjoyed killing.

"Millions of words have been written about how good a shot Jesse was. Well, he was damn good. Probably the best, but he still couldn't roll a tin can up the hill. That's moving the can by well-directed bullets. Jesse always automatically honed in and hit the can smack dab."

Jesse as Senator Clark was known as the Copper King. Did he ever tell you how much of the Anaconda Copper Company he owned?

"Well, he was pretty damn close-mouthed about his affairs - either of the heart or in business. And he had plenty of both! Now some historians think that Marcus Daley, the Montana tycoon, and Willie Clark were bitter enemies. Not so at all. They were friendly rivals. "Clark owned about 28 per cent of Anaconda and Daley somewhere around 20 per cent. Together, they held 49 per cent. A tall Dutch woman, Hilda Van Eck, owned 7 or 8 per cent so Willie and Daly took turns courting her vote. Clark finally sold his Anaconda interests to Rockefeller. In 1925, he tired of playing his Senator Clark role and had

himself 'buried'. He went to England with Gertie for awhile."

Did Senator Clark and Daley trust each other?

"Hell, no, they didn't. With a man named Hoffner, they owned the Placer Hotel in Helena, the Baxter Hotel in Bozeman and the Clark Hotel in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Daley and Clark went together and bought the stockyards in Spokane, Washington, but Willie told me they caught each other 'skimming' and had one hell of a falling out."

The kids of today are excited by Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. You knew them?

"Very well. They weren't killed in South America. Sundance was really Grat Dalton of the notorious Dalton Gang and Jesse James' cousin. I last saw Butch, the old Utah boy, up in Washington when he married Dotty, who was the daughter of T. E. Lawrence. Dalton and Cassidy and other members of the Wild Bunch always married within their clique - it was safer that way."

Some of Jesse James' relatives say he was psychic. Did you ever notice this?

"Yes, Jesse was very psychic. Had second sight. He'd get a funny look on his face and then say, 'I got a hunch.'

I was sitting with Willie one night in the Dillon Hotel in Butte when he got this funny look and said, 'You know, I have the feeling I should get down to El Centre, California, right away. There's trouble brewing.' He left in his private coach that night and headed off some big trouble. He was feeding out cattle near El Centre. Sometimes, his ESP or whatever it was, got sharper when he drank. And Willie was quite a drinker all the years I knew him." Any more facts on the Senator's secret life? "There are a hell of a lot of secrets I'm not going to tell you or anybody. It would serve no useful purpose and might even harm the innocent. Jesse James died at 107 in 1951, but he's still an emotional subject. Perhaps he always will be. No, that's all I have to say - I've probably rambled on too much as it is."

Before leaving the subject of Senator William A. Clark, his good deeds of yesteryear keep being remembered. The Clark Library at University of California at Los Angeles was given by the mysterious Montana senator.

He also had a hand in building old Los Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium on Fifth Street across from Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles. It should be noted that the real Jesse W. James was an accomplished violin player and loved classical music.

While I was a soldier in World War II my home address was 269 Loma Drive in Los Angeles. From the window in my room I could look diagonally across the intersection to the Clark Residence. My landlady, Mrs. Centa Greiner, said, "It was built long ago by some rich Los Angeles businessman named Clark. It was for unmarried working girls. That's all I know."

In February of 1973 a newspaper assignment took me along Third Street and as I passed Loma Drive I took a long, puzzled look at the Clark Residence that I had first seen thirty years ago. Back at my office I picked up the phone. A woman answered, "Clark YWCA Residence." She told me the Residence had been donated by "Colonel" William Andrews Clark in 1912.

"Do you mean Senator William Andrews Clark?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "he also had been a U.S. Senator. And our records say Senator Clark dedicated it to the memory of his mother, Mary Andrews."

I thanked her and hung up. Then I dug out my pocket notebook containing the James Family Tree. The name Mary Andrews James popped out at me. Would Senator William A. Clark have dedicated the Clark Residence to the memory of Jesse W. James' grandmother, Mary Andrews?

That night I called Jesse James III and asked him who Mary Andrews was. "Check your copy of the family tree," Jesse III replied, "and you'll find it was Grandpa's grandmother.

"Grandpa was particularly fond of his grandmother, Mary Andrews James, who lies buried in the old Black Log Cemetery 11 miles northwest of Zanesville, Ohio. I've visited her grave several times, but not in the past twenty years. The name of the cemetery has been changed now."

I sighed. "Positively amazing."

"Not so amazing at all," Jesse III said, "because the only Senator William A. Clark was created by Grandpa's fertile brain. On one hand it was Jesse James, outlawed killer, and on the other, William A. Clark, a philanthropist and patron of the arts. A real Jekyll and Hyde situation."

By the end of 1947, old Jesse told his grandson, "My financial affairs are all in order. I'd like to see somebody bust the arrangements I've set up - it would take a thousand Philadelphia lawyers or a hundred crooked judges." In early 1948, the old man sold the last of his stock in Sanger Brothers Stores in Dallas, Ft. Worth and Waco. "This ought to keep me in cigars, whisky and chewing tobacco the rest of my days," he mused.

The old man loved little children - nobody knows how many he fathered - and he thought of little things which would please them. He gave a zoo to the children of Butte and he had a difficult time passing a small Negro, Indian or Mexican child who looked hungry. He'd stop what he was doing to figure a way to give them a dollar or two gracefully.

He established the J. W. Ely Bridge Company in Jacksonville, Illinois. Did J. W. stand for Jesse Woodson? He told the manager, "Sure we'll make bridges, but I also want to make things that kids will enjoy." So a division of J. W. Ely built circus equipment,

Ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds, etc. It was also the J. W. Ely Co. that built the Angel's Flight, long a tourist attraction in downtown Los Angeles, California. Sometimes even Jesse's aliases were corrupted. History says it was built by Col J. W. Eddy, a lawyer and engineer who had been a friend of President Lincoln.

Jesse supported sports and many times found a way to commercialize on them. He made money managing John Trammell, the old bareknuckle fighter and he financially backed his cousin, World Heavyweight Champion "Gentleman Jim" Corbett. He was a horse racing buff to the end. Jesse liked wrestling, but not professional wrestling which he termed "just a little bit too damn phony." He was a friend of Jim Thorpe, the great Indian athlete.

He was fond of baseball. He liked to play it and watch. Jesse's interest in the game could have started with William (Dutch) Briedendolph, who was born in Maryland and immigrated to Missouri in 1872 and went to work for what Jesse called The Organization.

After playing shortstop for the Holden, Missouri, town team, in 1872, Briedendolph switched to the Houston, Missouri, town team in 1873, which had been organized by my great-grandfather, John Anderson Miller. Miller also managed the team and caught. Years later, during a reunion in Colorado, Briedendolph and Jesse were talking about early-day baseball and Briedendolph volunteered, "You could hit well and run like hell, but your arm and glove were just average." "You're missing the thing I did best, Dutch." "What's that, Colonel?"

"Stealing. Hell, I could really swipe those bases!" Jesse said with a chuckle.

After leaving Missouri, Dutch played the infield for Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and then at Dennison, Texas. In 1880, Jesse summoned Dutch to Colorado.

"Dutch," he said, "I've got the money and you have the talent so it seems we ought to make a good team. I wish you'd go out and help organize minor leagues or smaller time professional teams."

Briedendolph organized or purchased teams in Missouri, Iowa, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee and even on the West Coast.

In 1922, Jesse James III recalls that his grandfather's team in what he believes was the Northern League won the pennant. As a reward, Jesse brought the entire squad to his big ranch near Bruce, South Dakota.

Truly, Jesse James was a man whose ambitions knew no horizons.

His grandson said, "He was constantly reading or studying even-in old age. It took as many as four of us just to keep pace with him. I traveled thousands and thousands of miles with the old man. Back and forth between Canada and Texas and into Mexico.

Then from Long Island across country to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Long Beach. And then to Boise, Butte, Great Falls, Colorado Springs, Oklahoma, Louisiana and back to Texas. He was always tremendously busy looking after his vast holdings.

"Yes, Grandpa Jesse was always restless and on the move. Even when he was ready to die, he was a restless soul. He believed in the Spirit World - I just wonder if one Spirit World is big enough to contain old Jesse's restless energy." Some historians like to dwell on Jesse's killings and well they should. By his own admission shortly before his death he had killed 2,000 men and 13 women. Many of the women were Union or industrial spies.

But Women's Lib would have scorned Jesse's philosophy: "Sure, I like women. Love 'em, in fact. They should be around to wipe the kids' snotty noses, should be good in the kitchen and good in bed - but they should always mind their own damn business!"

Jesse W. James had a lot of businesses - and a lot of wives and mistresses in his long, colourful life as we shall see later. He had charisma and women flocked after him.

Chapter 8

The Odyssey of John Wilkes Booth

If John Wilkes Booth hadn't shot President Abe Lincoln at 10:15 p.m., Good Friday, April 14, 1865, in Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., today's encyclopaedias may have accorded him a few brief lines or none at all.

Booth was born in 1838 in Maryland, the son of Junius Brutus Booth, an actor, who was born in London in 1796. John's brother, Edwin Thomas Booth, was a well-known Shakespearian actor who died in 1893. Some historians claim John Wilkes Booth "inherited" insanity from his father, Junius.

One of America's top writers, Jim Bishop, did a remarkable job of researching Booth's activities leading up to the assassination in his book, **THE DAY LINCOLN WAS SHOT** (1955). He accurately portrayed Booth's treachery and fanaticism and the incompetence of his accomplices. But Bishop failed to report what the Confederates thought of one of their top spies, probably because the records weren't available to him. Bishop related the confusion following the shooting and how Booth made his escape from Washington via the Navy Yard Bridge and wrote, "There were stories which persisted for years it wasn't Booth who was killed."

The official U.S. Government version is that Col. E. J. Conger and 28 enlisted men cornered Booth in a barn near Bowling Green, Virginia, at 2 a.m., April 26, 1865. After the barn was set afire, Sgt. Boston Corbett shot Booth in the back of the head and he died, but not until a dramatic dialog took place. That wrote finis to the 27-year-old Booth. Or did it?

What about Confederate records? The Knights of the Golden Circle, the top Confederate underground organization headed by another "dead man," Col. Jesse Woodson James, had another version.

Prior to the Civil War, J. Wilkes Booth, as he liked to sign his name, had attended a military school, but had been bounced because he was too impetuous. When the war broke, Booth volunteered for the Confederate Army, but an officer was impressed with his intelligence and ability to interchangeably "talk like a Yankee and a Southerner." It was decided Booth could do more than shoot a gun.

After a short training course, Booth was soon moving back and forth through Union and Confederate lines with valuable military information for the South. At times, he used the name John Botha, the last name of a Russian-Jewish ancestor who settled in England. Posing as a drummer (salesman), he sold materiel of war to both sides.

While he was a competent enough spy, Booth had some traits which bothered his superiors. He asked too many questions about Confederate plans, and he enjoyed gathering gossip about Rebel generals. At times, the Confederates had Booth under

surveillance, believing he could be a double agent. Despite their suspicions, Booth continued to deliver damaging information on Union moves, and he did it in record time.

In spite of his service, Booth was never able to advance above The Knights of the White Camellias, the third-ranked Confederate secret organization. He brought ill-conceived schemes to kill President Lincoln, Gen. U.S. Grant and other high-ranking Union officers, to his superiors. Put down as a "loner," Booth boasted of personal friends who would help him commit the acts. Confederates doubted his leadership, and some of his friends were checked out and denied membership in any of the Southern secret organizations.

Following President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, J. Wilkes Booth went into a deep mental depression, punctuated at times by violent outbursts. He told his superiors, "Lincoln has freed the Negroes so the Negroes can make slaves of Southern white men and women! For this, he shall die!"

The final year of the Civil War when things were going badly for the South, Booth did less spying and more plotting on his own. He reported to his Confederate superiors, "A representative of the European Rothschilds called on President Lincoln and offered him money at 27% per cent interest, but was thrown out of his office."

A few years later, while gathered in the Confederate Underground Capital in Nashville, Tenn., The Knights of the Golden Circle heard a report from one of Booth's superiors in which he alleged the Rothschilds incident might have been the turning point in the spy's frustration. "Gentlemen," he said, "I personally think that John Wilkes Booth went to work for the Rothschilds and assassinated Mr. Lincoln in their behalf."

Most Southerners were shocked by the senseless assassination of President Lincoln. The war was over for all practical purposes, and their cause was lost. The Knights of the Golden Circle moved quickly to get Wilkes Booth to safety - he knew too much. Near a village in Maryland, the haggard assassin, his leg broken, was hidden in a wagon-load of chicken coops, the first leg of his journey to the Free State of Van Zandt, Texas.

William S. (Wild Bill) Lincoln, a distant cousin of the President, reported in a sworn statement: "Our branch of the Lincoln family was never satisfied with what really happened to Booth, and I spent fourteen years of my life running down the true story. Strangely enough, I learned it from Jesse W. James, head of the Confederate underground. I was present at Booth's real death.

"Jesse told me that Union troops and federal detectives traced Booth to an old barn on the Garrett farm in the hills near Bowling Green, Virginia. In their hysteria, they set the barn afire and then shot and killed a crippled Union veteran whose only crime was being drunk at 2 o'clock in the morning.

"Colonel James also told me the sad fact was that some mighty innocent people were made to suffer and even hung and imprisoned because of their association with Booth. He

said that the Confederate underground had no love for Booth - he had shot the President after it was too late. However, the organization protected him and put the lazy bastard on a \$3,600 a year pension as long as he behaved himself and caused them no trouble; but Booth couldn't stand fetters." Because of strict Confederate underground surveillance, Booth pulled up stakes and moved to Glen Rose, Texas, where he operated a distillery. He managed to get into difficulty with Federal authorities over a special U.S. permit and tax and sent his lawyer to the Federal District Court in Paris, Texas. Deserting his distillery, Booth moved north to Granbury, Hood County, Texas, where he built the city's first stone business building at the southwest corner of Courthouse Square, now used as a restaurant.

He also returned to the stage, a direct violation of his agreement with the underground. Texas Rangers and lawmen, mostly former Confederate soldiers, filed reports with The Knights of the Golden Circle telling about the strange behavior of John Wilkes Booth, alias James St. George. The actor-assassin was drinking heavily, bragging about being the man who shot Lincoln, and boasting about his knowledge of Confederate underground secrets.

The Golden Circle held a meeting and sentiment was strong for executing Booth, but Jesse W. James, who by this time was building an empire in the West, suggested, "I kind of agree with you about shutting his big mouth for good, but let's let him make a tour of theatres in the West. We'll send along two agents to ride herd on him."

Meanwhile, Wild Bill Lincoln, who was working as an acrobat, circus clown, lumberjack, cowhand and teamster, was hot on the trail of Booth or St. George. In the early 1890s he roomed for while with Charles Booth, who was a nephew of the man he sought. "Charlie told me" Lincoln recalled, "that he had visited his uncle in Texas and Booth had hired a lawyer to write a book about his secret life and how and why he shot President Lincoln. I eventually got hold of the book, and in it Booth tried to vindicate himself for the awful deed."

One night in the 1890s, Wild Bill Lincoln appeared on the same stage with John Wilkes Booth in Colorado City (now Colorado Springs), Colorado. "I talked to him," Lincoln recalled, "but I didn't know he was my man. He was using the name of Edwin Booth, his brother."

Then one night in 1902 or early 1903, Wild Bill was sitting in Colonel Jim McDaniels' (Jesse James) hotel room in Guthrie, Oklahoma, when a book was tossed his way. McDaniels lit a long cigar and said, "Believe it or not, Wild Bill, that book was written by one of your men in the White Camellias, old John Wilkes Booth, alias Edwin Booth, alias James St. George."

"Can I take it and read it, Colonel?"

"That's why I gave it to you. Read it and then burn it, you hear? The Knights of the Golden Circle bought up most of his press run, but there's a lot of dynamite in the book.

We're still preparing for the Second Civil War and Booth is busy revealing a lot of our secrets. He knows more than any of us ever thought."

In a sworn statement at Zephyrhills, Florida, on October 1, 1950, William S. (Wild Bill) Lincoln said, "While trying for years on my own to run down the John Wilkes Booth mystery, I landed right in the middle of the Jesse Woodson James mystery without half trying."

In the spring of 1903, Bill was working for the Colonel in Colorado when he received a telegram in Confederate code, urging him to "get to Guthrie, Oklahoma, as fast as you can." "Jim McDaniels" was waiting for him in the bar, and Wild Bill had a drink with him.

"Listen carefully, Wild Bill," McDaniel said, "because we're moving to Enid at dawn. Don't look now, but those seven fellows down at the end of the bar are Knights of the Golden Circle agents. The end is coming for that scoundrel, John Wilkes Booth. Knowing how you feel about him, I thought you'd want to be in on the kill."

Wild Bill gulped, "Are you serious, Colonel?"

"Never more serious in my life, son. I've spared that rascal's life many times. The Golden Circle just had a meeting down in Texas, and we voted to execute Booth. He was in Texas, too, but an hour after the meeting he flies the coop. He either has a pipeline into our Inner Circle or he's just plain mystic - I don't know which. Three days ago, our agents located him in Anadarko, but then he headed north."

"So you think he's in Enid then?" Wild Bill asked.

"We know he's registered at the Grand Avenue Hotel in Enid tonight under the name of James St. George. I've got two agents up there, and he won't go any farther because I've sent word that I, as head of the Golden Circle, will deal with him."

"Is he armed?" Wild Bill asked.

"Who in hell cares if that bum is or not? I'll take care of him."

"How old a man is Booth?"

The older man tugged at his beard thoughtfully. "Well, I'm 59, and I seem to recall Booth is six years older so that would put him at 65. The damn fool hasn't drawn a sober breath practically since the night he shot President Lincoln thirty-eight years ago. How old are you, Wild Bill?"

"Just 30, sir."

"Well, get some sleep. We want to leave early so we can make Enid at a decent hour

tomorrow night."

A half block from the Grand Avenue Hotel that night a young Indian boy was selling lemons from a small basket. The Colonel stopped and said to Wild Bill, "Have this kid make you about a quart of lemonade, pronto, while I duck into this drug store."

Four Golden Circle agents sat in the lobby while the other three joined the two agents already surrounding the hotel - just in case Booth made a run for it.

"Mr. St. George expects us," the Colonel told the desk clerk and he started up the steps, followed closely by Wild Bill with a jar of lemon juice.

The door was unlocked and the two men could see the shape of a man lying on the bed. The Colonel lighted the gas light and Booth twisted in his bed. Beside the bed were three empty whisky bottles.

"Just wanna drink. Jus' wanna..." the man muttered. Then he opened his eyes. Startled, he said, "Colonel, you've come to kill me!"

"Take it easy, Mr. St. George," Jesse said, moving a chair close to the bed and sitting down.

"You are Jesse James and the world should know!" Booth charged, suddenly stone sober.

"Impossible, Mr. St. George, because Jesse James was killed more than twenty years ago. Jesse James is legally dead."

Booth sat up, alarmed. "Stop playing cat and mouse with me, damn you, Jesse James!"

"I could call you John Wilkes Booth, Mr. St. George, but the whole world knows Booth is dead," Jesse said gently.

"You know damn well that I am John Wilkes Booth!" Booth practically bellowed. Perspiration poured from the actor's face.

For a moment Jesse stared at the shell of a man.

"I need a drink!" Booth commanded.

"Being a hot night, Mr. Booth, we brought you something cool to drink. Now, Wild Bill, you talk to Mr. Booth while I fix up his drink."

Jesse went over to the wash stand with the jar of lemonade. Hastily, he pulled two bottles from his pocket and poured pure arsenic into the jar. Then he stirred the mixture with a table fork. He poured the loaded lemonade into a glass.

Approaching the bed, Jesse said, "Now, Mr. Booth, I think you've had enough alcohol for tonight. This lemonade will really fix you up. I personally guarantee it."

Booth balked. "A goddamn ladies' drink. I won't do it!"

"Come on now, Mr. Booth. Try just a swallow or two."

The actor swallowed half a glass and said, "Not a bad drink at that." He turned to Wild Bill and asked, "Do we know each other? Your face looks familiar."

Wild Bill coughed. "Yes, Mr. Booth, some years back we were on the same stage in Colorado City."

"How interesting. Did I give a good performance?" He drained his glass and Jesse filled it up again.

"You were superb, Mr. Booth," Wild Bill assured him.

"What was the name of the play, do you remember?" the actor asked.

"It was called Our American Cousin,, I believe, sir." Booth gulped the last of the lemonade. He tore at his collar. "Open another window in here, damn it, I can't breathe."

Then he stood up and addressed Wild Bill. "What did you say your name was?"

"Lincoln, Mr. Booth. You shot a cousin of mine, Abraham Lincoln!"

"Lincoln... Lincoln..." Booth gasped, went into almost a stage fall, but hit the floor with a thud.

Jesse James bent over and felt his heart. "Deader than a mackerel," he said. "Wild Bill, stay here. I'm sending up the four agents in the lobby to go through Booth's luggage. I'll be back in a few minutes."

While his agents searched Booth's suitcase and trunk, the Colonel went up to the desk clerk. He slid two \$20 gold pieces under his hand. "Mr. St. George isn't feeling too well tonight. I'd suggest you look in on him in the morning. If he isn't feeling better, call a doctor. He requested that we take his trunk with us tonight because we're headed for his brother's place in Kansas City."

"Sure enough," said the clerk, pocketing the gold pieces. "If you ask me, old St. George is just plain drunk."

"You might have a point at that, son," Jesse said, going back up the stairs.

The six men were amazed at the records Booth had kept through the years. After they had

finished sorting it, Jesse said, "You know, men, I'm just glad Booth didn't put all this in that crazy book his lawyer wrote - he could have put a noose around all of our necks!"

Colonel James then directed his men to plant just enough evidence around the room so that the U.S. Marshals could identify the dead man as John Wilkes Booth. Then they took the trunk and departed, nodding cordially to the desk clerk on the way out.

The men camped a few miles out of Enid and while dinner cooked, Jesse, mused, "It's kind of funny but in 399 BC, Socrates' enemies forced him to drink a fatal dose of hemlock because he knew too much. And tonight, 2,302 years later, Booth's friends forced him to drink a fatal dose of arsenic because he talked too much."

"Well, Colonel," Wild Bill said, stirring the fried potatoes, "if I live to be a hundred, I won't forget tonight!"

Late that afternoon from Guthrie, Jesse had an agent send a telegram to the U.S. Marshal's office telling them John Wilkes Booth was dead and where his body could be found.

Three days later, Jesse, accompanied by Wild Bill and two agents, went back to Enid and Jesse slipped two \$20 gold pieces under the hand of the desk clerk.

The clerk said, "Whole bunch of lawmen were here yesterday morning up there in Mr. St. George's room, but his body is still there in the bed. It's starting to turn black-like and is tough as leather."

"Don't worry, son," Jesse said, "we're relatives and we've come to claim his body."

Up in the room, Jesse muttered, "The Union War Department once offered \$100,000 reward for Booth, dead or alive. Now we laid Booth right in the Yankee laps and they don't want him!"

Carting the body of Booth back to Guthrie, Jesse looked up a doctor friend and asked him for a diagnosis. "It would appear that this man swallowed so much poison, probably arsenic, that he is permanently preserved. He's like a damn Egyptian mummy!"

Through a friendly town marshal, Jesse learned that the federal men had checked out John Wilkes Booth's body and papers in Enid and reported some transient posing as Booth had committed suicide. The report listed the dead man's name as James St. George.

Wild Bill wrote years later, "Was the Booth case still too hot to touch in 1903? I'm sure Dr. Samuel Mudd along with others would have been vindicated, and it would have exposed the earlier ill-conceived, hysterical investigation, but the U.S. Marshals just turned their backs on the case. Maybe the U.S. government by 1903 had uncovered the real facts in the Booth case and was too ashamed to admit the big blunders made by the government in 1865."

Under Jesse James' direction, the leathery, mummified body of John Wilkes Booth was put in a special coffin and several of his men took it on an exhibition tour all over the United States.

Jesse James III reports the Booth body was owned by a Glencoe, Minnesota, jeweller named Jay Gould, a relative of the financier, who had it stored. "This was in 1955 and I believe Gould has passed away. What happened to the body? Who knows? Perhaps John Wilkes Booth, hated by both the North and the South, is destined to lie forever unburied and unwanted."

Chapter 9

The Incredible Black Cobra

Jesse James once said, "John Trammell was one of the most loyal, proficient and daredevil friends, black or white, that I ever had. People are making all this fuss over me, when somebody should be writing about old John Trammell. For more than half a century, we rode life's trails together, knew the same colorful characters of the Old West and shared the same excitement."

The tall, powerful Negro helped Jesse rescue General Shelby's troops and bring out Emperor Maximilian's treasure in 1867, he witnessed General George Custer's demise at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, watched Colonel Jesse James gun down Wild Bill Hickock in Deadwood City, was in on the Northfield bank fiasco, killed Charlie Bigelow's two brothers, Bert and John, during the St. Joseph hoax, and was Jesse's constant companion until the colonel "pensioned John off when Trammell was in his 90s and the Negro went to live out his days in Guthrie, Oklahoma.

In 1948 when Jesse James came out of hiding, the two old men reminisced. John recalled, "Ah knew Mistah Jesse undah a whole passle o'names. Dere was J. Frank Dalton, Roy Hewitt, Jesse Redmond, John Franklin, Big Bush Hopkins, Jim Barnhill, W. A. Clark, Sgt. Lawrence Schofield, an' ah guess 'bout fifty udder names. Ah cain't 'member dem all...jus' too menny. Ah allus calls him, Tha Kern-el.' But he de real Jesse James. Ah knows dat!"

Was "Sgt. Lawrence Schofield" the name Jesse used when he joined the Union Fifth Cavalry after the Civil War? Trammell didn't know, saying "But when he was fightin' tha Injuns, he was Sgt. Schofield, an' he sho did git lotsa furloughs, he did."

The colorful saga of John Trammell, entwined with the lives of Colonel James and Jesse's Georgia cousins, the Porters, is an unknown chapter in the Negro history of America. Trammell was no Dr. George Washington Carver, but he made heavy contributions to the history of the West and the South. Modern-day black militants seek publicity, but Trammell, like Jesse James whom he worshipped, avoided it like the plague. He helped Jesse cover his trail from the eyes of lawmen and the curious. After he joined Jesse's Underground Army, Trammell never suffered from discrimination. He was Jesse's close friend, bodyguard, confidante and complete equal. Nobody ever called Trammell a "nigger" in Colonel James' presence. There were instances where it was tried, but the offender died of "lead poisoning" if he didn't apologize. Trammell loved to cook and he took these duties upon himself. Some oldtimers referred to Trammell as "the black Jesse James, if there ever was one." It was an accolade Trammell had earned and deserved.

But just who was John Trammell? Who was this giant who was born in 1835 when Andy Jackson was President and who lived under twenty-eight American Presidents before cashing in his chips at Guthrie, Oklahoma, in 1956 at the age of 121? He was a year old when the Alamo fell in 1836, and he was born while James Madison, the fourth President

of the United States, was still alive.

Trammell was born in a primitive cabin on the Porter Plantation in Oglethorpe County, Georgia, between Atlanta and Augusta. According to Porter records, Trammell's father was "a Negro stud who sired thirty-six suckers (offspring) for the plantation. His mother was a tall, handsome wench. Sam (John's slave name) lived with his mother until he was 5, then he was placed in a 'dormitory' with other black male youngsters." Slaves in pre-Civil War days didn't have last names, but Sam's father's name was Skates - thus Sam Skates.

Sam Skates was plainly bred to be a field worker. At the age of 12, Sam was 6 feet tall and weighed about 130 pounds. One of the Porter brothers, Ike, had taken a fancy to the youth, who was not only strong and intelligent, but could follow orders. At Ike Porter's suggestion, Sam was put in charge of a group of twenty youths who dug long trenches in the cornfields. Another crew would come along and drop seed kernels in the trench, and yet another group would cover the seed with rakes.

A lazy or slow trench-digging crew would slow down the entire corn-planting process. White overseers set quotas for each day, and Sam Skates was determined to keep well ahead of the two crews which followed him in the warm Georgia sun. As a strawboss, Sam put up with no foolishness. Strawbosses received better food and certain privileges, and Sam was anxious to please Ike Porter.

This particular day Sam Skates had been assigned a troublemaker slightly older than himself, and the overseer had admonished Sam, "This bastid is an ornery critter, but mebbe yo' kin git him tuh work. Ahm jus' achin' tuh peel some skin ofn his black ass wid mah black snake."

Sam rose to the challenge and had a private talk with the youth, who replied, "Yo' don' scare me none, Sam, yo' jus' a white man's rag doll, yo' is." From the start, the youth, whose name was Jeb, began clowning. He disrupted the rhythm and loudly sang the wrong work songs.

Once Sam became so angry he grabbed Jeb's work hat and threw it in the dirt. Next he threatened to rip off Jeb's work clothes if he didn't behave, but the rebellious youth continued to mimic Sam and disobey orders. Sam grabbed a hoe to make up for Jeb's deficiency. Suddenly Sam turned around and saw Jeb lying down with his old straw hat over his eyes. "Git up, yo' lazy Nigger!" Sam shouted. When Jeb refused to move a muscle, Sam lost his temper and let go at Jeb's head with his heavy-duty hoe. Then Jeb's arms and legs began to twitch and Sam, alarmed, reached down and pulled off Jeb's hat. He was "deadern a door nail."

The overseer rode up on his black gelding, jumped down and examined Jeb. He was dead alright from a huge wound in the head. Sam was questioned and readily admitted his act. "Ah tell yo', Marse Will-yum, dis boy, Jeb, he gittin' evah boddy into a heap a trubbles. He prancin', dancin', disturbin', but not workin'."

The white overseer admired Sam's honesty and Jeb had been a known troublemaker, but at 13 Jeb was worth probably \$2,500 and would bring a great deal more at maturity and when he was trained. The overseer would catch hell from the Porter boys. Whipping of slaves on the Porter Plantation was taboo except in rare cases. To the overseer, murder was such an instance.

"Sam, yo' strip of'n yo' shirt and jus' hug that tree ovah yondah. Fust off, pull off yo' shirt. Now git!"

The 12-year-old strawboss obeyed the overseer's command and hugged the tree. Marse Williams' first slash just stung his backside, but Sam knew the next ones would tear off hunks of flesh. He was suddenly gripped by panic and terror. Stark-naked, Sam ran like a deer and leaped over a rail fence like a gazelle and in a matter of seconds he had disappeared into the deep woods. Years later, Skates, now Trammell, remembered, "Boy, dat whip wuz'n 'bout tuh grab me no moh, no suh. I wuz one sackfull o'scairt boy, ah wuz!"

When Ike Porter came riding by and learned the details he called the overseer to the Big House, verbally flailed him for attempting to flog Sam, who was "only a well-meaning and obedient youngster." He fired the overseer, paid him off and advised him to get out and stay out of the State of Georgia.

"Yo' tha boss, Mistah Porter, an' ah'll go, but that Nigger he come home when he git hungry 'nuff," the fired overseer said as he mounted his horse with his belongings tied behind his saddle.

The Porter brothers fully expected to see Sam Skates by nightfall, but when he still hadn't appeared next morning, they rode into the woods, calling out his name and offering him food. But by this time, the frightened Sam had gone deeper into the forest until he found a spring near the river. He was able to catch a small fish with his hands and ate it raw. Then he crawled into a hollow fallen log and slept.

Word spread throughout the Georgia countryside that the Porters had a runaway slave. The sheriff came by to offer use of his hounds. He patted his muzzle-loading rifle, assuring Ike Porter a well-placed shot in the leg would bring the youngster to bay. Young hunters came by with their dogs, offering to track down Sam, but Ike Porter made it clear that he didn't want Sam injured in any way and said he felt Sam had good cause to head for the woods.

Weeks became months and months became years, but Sam remained hidden in the woods. Sam reverted to the savage ways of his African ancestors. He missed fires for warmth or cooking purposes, but he reasoned a fire would give away his location. Once lightning struck a tree just after Sam had clubbed a small wild boar to death so he roasted the pig. It was the only warm food he had during his exile which lasted six years.

Sam ate grubs found in rotting logs. He robbed quail and grouse nests of eggs, climbed trees to obtain baby squirrels, but his main fare was fish caught in brooks. In season, he stuffed his stomach full of wild berries. Twice in six years, he caught deer in snares made from vines, but most of the venison spoiled before he could eat it. Mushrooms and roots rounded out his diet. Sometimes he'd raid nearby fields for melons and corn.

Housing remained a problem. For a while he slept in a small cave, but hurriedly moved out when he learned it belonged to a bear. He built a crude tree house which he used in the summers when foliage was heavy. Being strong, Sam managed to put half a dozen old logs together. He made a bed from leaves, grass and boughs. Then he camouflaged his crude home with dirt, rocks and tree branches. His strange abode was located a short distance from the nearest trail and was so well concealed that at first Sam would walk past it without spotting it.

The lack of clothing bothered Sam, particularly in the damp, chilly Georgia winters. He managed to weave crude blankets from plants, leaves and twigs, but when he tried to adapt them to his body, they fell apart.

He forgot how to talk, but found his sense of smell, sight and hearing greatly improved. Several years after he was caught, Sam admitted to Ike Porter that he missed human companionship but was cheered by the songs of birds.

It is possible that Sam would have "emerged" from his exile at the end of the first year, but young men were still riding through the forest hunting deer, opossum, bear or foxes. Other stealthy hunters came in the fall to hunt birds. Sam saw their guns and reasoned they were searching for him. The young man was amazed to find that his sense of smell had become so keen that he could not only sniff out bears, panthers, wolves and other animals but that he could detect humans with his nostrils. Truly, Sam Skates had become little more than an animal.

During the summer months, field hands didn't work on Sundays and that was the day he generally made his forays for corn and melons, which were plentiful. During five years of exile, Sam had never strayed more than perhaps ten or fifteen miles from where he was born. The Porters had long since decided that their runaway slave was dead, and Sam Skates was all but forgotten.

But runaway slaves were not uncommon in Georgia or other places in the South. A black man in the woods was always suspect. This particular Sunday in August of 1852 Sam had ventured from the forest at an inopportune time, but he was hungry for melons and corn. Several groups of young men were hunting (probably rabbits) with their hounds on Sunday morning when several of the hunters saw Sam slip out of the forest and into a corn field.

"Nigger on the run!" they yelled and the chase was on. Horsemen and hounds headed between the rows of corn bound for Sam. It was a long, narrow field. While the main body chased Skates down the rows, one party began a flanking movement on the forest

side of the field; yet another group covered the right flank. As he ran, Sam, more animal than human, sensed his predicament. His heart beating wildly, Sam speeded straight ahead.

When he ran out of cornfield, he was startled to find himself in the middle of Lexington, Georgia, and the hunters and hounds were closing in. The streets were lined with carriages belonging to planters who were attending church. He stopped, his terrified eyes seeking a refuge. Still his pursuers came on. It was a warm morning and the large oaken doors of a church stood open before him. With the nearest hounds only thirty feet away, Sam, stark naked and a cornered beast, bounded up the stone steps and down the aisle followed by a dozen baying hounds. The sexton jumped up and closed the doors. The minister, only five minutes into his sermon, fainted dead away. Ike Porter whispered to his startled wife, "My Gawd, it's Sam Skates!"

With a mighty leap, Sam jumped up on the organ while the hounds clawed and bayed. A quick-thinking member of the choir grabbed a pitcher of water, poured it on the preacher's face, reviving him. When he observed the bedlam, he promptly fainted again, but not before he bellowed something about a "black devil." A deacon drew a dueling pistol from his waistband and advanced on Sam who was standing on the organ wondering where he'd go next. Women covered their eyes and children clutched each other and whimpered. The males, all slave-owners, cursed openly. But only the deacon had a weapon. Shaking like a leaf, the deacon raised his gun, but as he was about to pull the trigger, Ike Porter hit his arm, and the shot went wild.

The shot was Sam's cue to leap for the nearest window, which was open at the top. He squeezed through, swung onto a tree branch and disappeared into the foliage. While the congregation tried to shake off this terrible sacrilege, the preacher was revived, and he roared to the sexton, "Git these damn dawgs outa here!"

Then the minister called off services. The sheriff arrived and formed a posse to hunt the runaway. But the trail had grown cold. The sheriff dispatched men to encircle the town and to "git that Nigger dead 'er 'live." But Sam Skates had simply vanished. The preacher sternly lectured Ike Porter on the church steps for "mollycoddlin'" his slaves.

All day Sam hid in the tree and the sheriff called off the chase, deciding that the slave had returned to the woods. He assailed Ike Porter, "Man men has orders to kill that black bastid wot showed his big, black cod 'n' balls to all them fine ladies right in church, fer Chrissakes."

An oldtimer, who had been an Indian scout with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, came up to Ike Porter. He had moved to Georgia five years ago to get away from cold New England winters and had made few friends. Although he was past 80, the oldtimer claimed to have his full faculties. He told Ike, "Hunting squirrels, Indians or Negroes is all the same. You stand quiet like and let them make the first move. If you want, I can get a line on your man, Sam Skates. I'll learn his habits and he'll never know I'm about."

Porter promised the old scout a hundred dollars in gold in advance and another hundred dollars when he was captured alive. "Don' wan' him shot," the planter cautioned the oldtimer.

As the afternoon wore on, Sam Skates chewed leaves to help quench his terrible thirst. He kept squinting at the sun, trying to gauge how long it would be until dark when he would break for his home in the forest.

Poor Sam had no way of knowing that a lemonade and cake social was scheduled that night on the church grounds. After the bedlam that morning, the minister had considered calling off the event, but wives had already baked the cakes and with the runaway slave safely back in the forest, the event went ahead on schedule.

Tables were set up right under his tree and filled with cakes and cookies. Another table held huge crocks of lemonade. People gathered hurriedly and Sam, high on his perch, tried his best to catch a word now and then. But it was merely a babble of voices. Sam had completely forgotten the language, but he suddenly remembered the smell of civilized food. He was particularly fond of sweets and tried to figure out a way to steal a cake. But at dusk lanterns were lit and women and children made frequent trips to the crocks for lemonade. With the exception of the preacher and two deacons, including the one who had tried to shoot him in the church that morning, the men weren't around. They were out on the street standing around a carriage drinking corn liquor.

His hunger began to get the best of him, and Sam drooled as he eyed the big cake with white icing directly below the branch on which he lay. But how to get low enough to seize the delicacy - that was the problem. Sam stealthily advanced down the tree to the lowest branch. By crawling out on the limb, his weight would bring it right over the cake.

It was a fine theory, but the limb snapped, dropping Sam sprawling right in the middle of a dozen dainty cakes. The deacon reached for the pistol in his waistband, drew it and fired, hitting the preacher in the right arm. Women screamed as the black giant leaped from the table, stopping only to seize the big white cake, and, then covered with frosting, Sam Skates bolted off into the night. People were too stunned to give chase and Sam made it to the forest without difficulty.

Every other Sunday after church Ike Porter rode to the old scout's rooming house for a report. Autumn, spring and another summer rolled around.

Porter was angry - a whole year had rolled past and the scout would probably die of old age before Sam Skates could be safely captured. The patient old scout was unperturbed by Ike's heated words.

"Look," he said, "I've learned quite a bit about Sam Skates in the past year. Remember, I'm tracking a savage animal who can smell me. I know the spring he drinks from, I know where he sleeps and I know how he eats. I got his patterns down pat."

"Then whyinhell ain't we cotched him?" Porter demanded.

"Because you don't want him hurt," the old scout answered.

Porter demanded action. He was missing a slave who might be worth \$5,000, the doctor had charged him \$10 to patch up the wounded preacher, he'd paid \$10 contribution to the Ladies Aid because the church social had been ruined by the slave's fall into the cakes and he'd already advanced the old scout \$100 in gold.

Moreover, he'd taken the old scout's advice and put a young Negress into the forest to decoy Sam, but Skates had ignored the maiden, refusing to budge from his established patterns.

Now the old scout asked for two slaves who would each bring a coil of rope and join him tomorrow at twilight. "You see, Mr. Porter, I know Sam's habits. Every evening, he comes down to this spring, takes a long drink and then jumps in and splashes around like a Banshee for about five minutes. If we're downwind, I think we can take him. I'll be carrying two sticks of firewood."

"What fo'?" Porter asked.

"I been practicing up tossing firewood at an old kettle behind my rooming house. I can hit it nine out of 10 times. I figure on conking Sam on the head. Don't worry, I won't kill him - just stun him."

The following evening members of the Porter family were seated on the veranda trying to escape the August heat when they heard a commotion down the lane. Lighting a lantern, Ike Porter went out to greet the strange procession, which had just been joined by about twenty slaves.

Sam Skates was snarling like a wild beast, but the ropes held him firmly trussed to the pole. "Don't get too close, Mr. Porter," the old scout warned, "Sam's like a tiger. I conked him with the first stick of stovewood. Good thing, too, knocked him cold. Otherwise, we'd never caught him. By the time he come to, we had him trussed up. Where will we put him?"

The wild young man, only 18, was placed in the plantation's slave jail. The old scout said, "This man is stronger than Samson. Don't loosen his bonds - he'll work out of them fast enough. Just hope the bars are strong enough to hold him. And, by the way, Mr. Porter, I'll collect that \$100 gold you owe me."

Next morning at sunup, Sam Skates' growls, barks and snarls ran through the slave quarters. Ike Porter took charge. He brought Sam's mother down to the jail and Sam seemed to recognize her - at least he quieted down. Skates tore at his food like a gorilla, but Ike remembered Sam's fondness for sweets. He tempted him with candy and cake, and Sam seemed to respond.

In a week, Skates was chained between two husky slaves who ran down plantation lanes to give the prisoner exercise. Sam, who had always liked Porter, began to smile when Ike approached. It now had been a month since Sam was captured.

One morning, as the two slaves brought the manacled Skates past the Big House, Ike Porter halted the three men. In one hand he had a bag of candy and cookies. In the other hand he held the keys to the chains. Porter gambled and won. Sam Skates had returned to civilization, and he followed Ike around like a puppy.

When his master drove into town, Sam would follow the carriage at a trot. Finally, Ike bought Sam a red and white uniform and he became his master's footman, driver and body servant. Sam slept on a cot outside Ike's door and Porter taught Sam rudimentary table manners. By now, Sam was 6 foot, 3 inches tall, but weighed only 170 pounds. He was all muscle, agility and speed. While wrestling with men 75 pounds heavier than he was, Sam would toss them around like ten-pins.

A few years later, Ike Porter's cousin, Dr. Sylvester Franklin James, from Scott County, Kentucky, fresh out of medical school, visited the Porter plantation. Watching Sam Skates engage in horse play with other slaves, Dr. Frank said, "Cousin, I don't think wrestling is Sam's sport. He's a natural bareknuckle fighter. Sam's quick and strong, and he's not too heavy. Any buck you matched him against would outweigh him, which means you could get damn favourable odds."

Cousin Ike was quick to point out that bareknuckle fighting was strictly against the law in the State of Georgia, but he admitted he had attended half a dozen secret matches in plantation barns, on river islands and even aboard river packets. Somehow, the sheriff always happened to be called out of town when a match was held.

With Ike's permission, Dr. Frank volunteered to begin Sam's training. He sat up a sand bag in one of Ike's barns, away from prying eyes, both white and black. He taught Sam how to dance around the ring, feint, dodge, jab, duck, punch and counter punch. The Kentuckian was amazed at Sam's speed and extra-long, powerful arms.

"Sam'll be champion some day. He can kick like a mule with either hand. I can't keep him in sandbags - he just keeps busting them open. I'm afraid he'll kill the first man who gets in the ring with him. He doesn't know his own strength."

During Dr. Frank's two-week visit, cousin Ike often pressed him to arrange a match for Sam.

"Now you listen to me, Ike Porter," Dr. Frank said, "you keep this young fellow under wraps. Don't tip your hand. Keep him out of sight. This fall after all the crops are in, the big city men will be bringing their highly-touted fighters through the South. I've got to return to Louisville, but I'll be back about the first of November."

Back home, Dr. Frank began to write letters to friends he had attended medical college with, building up "The Black Cobra," the name he had selected for Sam Skates.

Medical doctors were early supporters of bareknuckle fighting, but most of them probably attended the bouts because there were no other spectator sports available. One of Dr. Frank's letters to a young doctor friend in New Orleans bore fruit. He wrote: "A Monsieur Le Blanc, a very wealthy Delta plantation owner, who owns the services of Big Boy, undefeated Negro champion, is hoping to arrange fights in Memphis, Jackson, Montgomery and Atlanta areas during the latter part of October and during November. I have spoken to him about your cousin's fighter and he is most anxious to arrange an encounter. I recently witnessed Big Boy fight and earnestly believe this giant will never be defeated - except by the infirmities of age. He stands 6 foot, 6 inches, and weighs 270 pounds. I can only pray your cousin's man survives the fight."

Two weeks later, Dr. Frank received a letter by special post from cousin Ike Porter: "Come at once, Frank. I want you here prior to the introduction of Mr. Sam Skates of Georgia and Mr. Big Boy of New Orleans on Sunday afternoon, November 13, 1853. Details when you arrive. Ike."

Dr. Frank packed a bag and scrambled off for Georgia, first borrowing \$5,000 from his father, Captain George James. Upon arriving at the Porter plantation, he learned Sam Skates' debut would be held in a large horse barn several miles from the Porter place. Dr. Frank learned that Ike's friend who was promoting the affair had bribed the sheriff to stay away, but the sheriff was coming in a disguise because he had heard so much about the champion Big Boy. There would be three preliminary bouts.

"Honestly, Frank, ahm shakin' lak a leaf!" Ike said.

"Well, I'm here to take over Sam's training, so quit worrying. With a pupil like Sam I don't have to be much of a teacher. Tell your cooks to begin preparing lots of roast beef on the rare side, and cousin, I suggest you Porter boys have plenty of money along because unless I miss my guess the odds will be 10 to 1 in Big Boy's favor," Frank replied.

When the Porter family arrived at the plantation Sunday at 1 p.m. the yard was jammed and rigs were parked clear down in the slave quarter and in a muddy cotton field back of the huge barn. Women had accompanied their men and were busily sipping tea and gossiping in the huge mansion.

In the barn, makeshift benches were lined up against the wall. The homemade ring sat in the middle. Sturdy, unpadded ring posts had been sunk in the dirt floor. Two strands of heavy rope were strung between the posts. The floor was made of heavy planking, set about a foot off the dirt.

Dr. Frank had sent Ike and Sam Skates down to a cabin in the slave quarters. "Ike, I don't want him even to be seen until I send for you. This is all part of the strategy."

The promoter introduced Dr. Frank to Monsieur Le Blanc, who barely shook hands. Le Blanc was arguing the ring was too large. The Frenchman's English was poor. He spoke an excited mixture of French and Cajun. The promoter had difficulty getting the gist of the owner's objections. Dr. Frank spoke to Le Blanc in fluent French, but he was answered in Cajun.

Finally, a New Orleans doctor of French descent spoke up, "Mr. Le Blanc he say reeng too beeg. Why so beeg? Hees fight-air, Beeg Boy, he stand up and fight. Who so beeg reeng? To run race?"

In desperation, the promoter summoned the referee, a drummer (salesman) from Philadelphia, who told the New Orleans doctor: "We're fighting under Georgia rules, you tell Le Blanc and Big Boy. We have bigger rings here. Another thing, you tell Le Blanc that under Georgia rules a round ends when a man's knee touches the floor. Two minute rests between rounds. I know Big Boy likes a clean knockdown to end a round, but you tell them they're fighting in Georgia today, not in Louisiana!"

The New Orleans doctor conferred with M. Le Blanc and then turned to the promoter and Dr. Frank. "Mr. Le Blanc say ett no mat-tair. Beeg Boy keel hees opponent in beeg reeng or leetle reeng!"

Then Dr. Frank spotted Big Boy. The preliminaries hadn't yet started, but the giant, attired in a gaudy, multi-colored wrap and orange-colored towel over his head, sat at ringside, a bored scowl on his face. "There's confidence for you," Dr. Frank muttered to himself.

The three preliminary bouts were over in a hurry. Although the Philadelphia referee, who was being paid \$100 for an afternoon's work, tried to give an edge to the Georgia back country boys, the Delta fighters, much more experienced, cut them to ribbons. There was little wagered in behalf of the Georgians, although some of them were fairly well-known in bareknuckle circles in the state. In the final fight before the main event, a gutty local boy was taking a terrible beating from a New Orleans fancy dan. He refused to drop his knee to the floor, thus being rewarded with a twominute rest period.

Three times the Georgian was knocked down, but each time he struggled to his feet and made for his opponent, causing the referee to drag him to the stool in his corner. In the fourth round, the Louisianan cut the plantation boy to ribbons. The field worker stumbled and fell. As he tried to rise, the referee "accidentally" kicked the Georgian in the head, mercifully coldcocking him. His seconds carried him from the ring, a battered and bleeding hulk.

Even before he was announced, Big Boy jumped through the ropes and began strutting around the ring, waving his orange-colored towel at the assembled fans. The wealthy Oglethorpe County planters, bankers and doctors gasped at Big Boy's size. They had no idea who his local opponent would be except that he was a protege of Ike Porter, a

wealthy and respected planter.

The referee invited Le Blanc into the ring to tell about Big Boy's achievements, but the Frenchman sent his New Orleans doctor friend. "Very simple, Beeg Boy he fight thir-tee time, he keel hees man twenty-five time. He killair Beeg Boy, Delta champion!"

The planter-promoter was also acting as holder of all bets. A local bank employee sat there with a ledger book and a big strong box.

Le Blanc conferred hastily with the New Orleans doctor, who was still in the ring. The doctor announced, "M. Le Blanc very reech man. He bets \$20,000, giving two-to-one odds." This started a small lineup toward the promoter's desk.

At this moment, Dr. Frank opened the door and strode Ike Porter, followed by a tall, skinny young man, easily outweighed a hundred pounds by Big Boy. The Delta champion was taller, too, but perhaps the Georgian had a longer reach.

The church deacon gasped and began whispering to all who would listen. "Thas Sam Skates, Ike's runaway slave. Sam, nekkid as a jaybird, break up our church meetin' and the church social. Sam, he live six years as a wild man. He plenty strong!"

Le Blanc laughed and smirked and even the referee looked pale. Le Blanc whispered to his doctor friend. "M. Le Blanc now geeeves 10-to-1 odds. Yes, 10-to-1!"

"Wot yo' boy got, Ike?" a planter called.

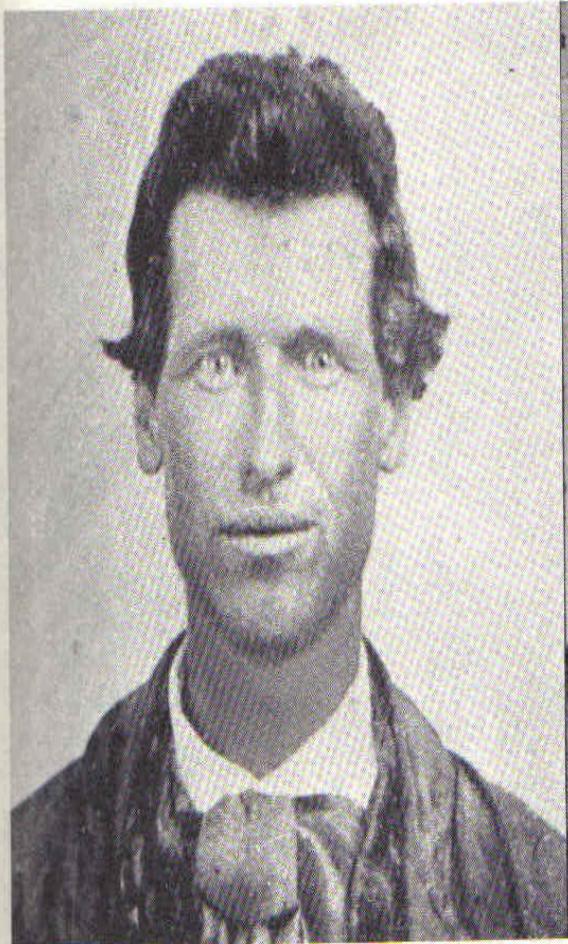
"Why, Bob, he show up!" the crowd tittered.

Ike Porter marched to the promoter's desk and shouted, "Ah, Ike Porter, pus-sonally cover Mistah Blanc's \$20,000. At odds of 10-to-1. And then ah wan' 'nutha \$20,000 the same way!"

The New Orleans doctor handed \$50,000 to the promoter and Dr. Frank covered it with the \$5,000 he'd borrowed from his father. The Georgians didn't know if Sam Skates could fight, but they respected Ike and his brother's judgment so there was a rush to cover any available Delta money. A tall man with a pinched white face, wearing a long frock cloak, was engaged in a lengthy discussion with the local banker. Then the tall man conferred with M. Le Blanc



Jesse James



An 1870 photo of Jesse James in Colorado City, Colo.



Classic 1870 pose of Jesse James with crossed guns.

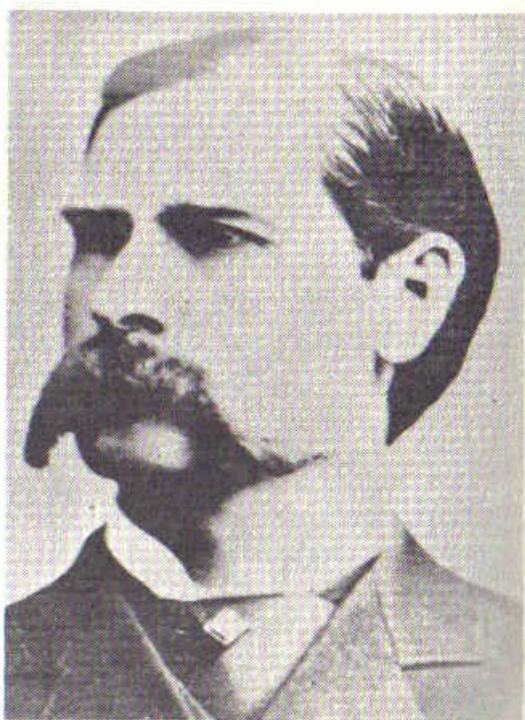


Bob Dalton and Miss Eugenia Moore, long after he was "killed" at Coffeyville.

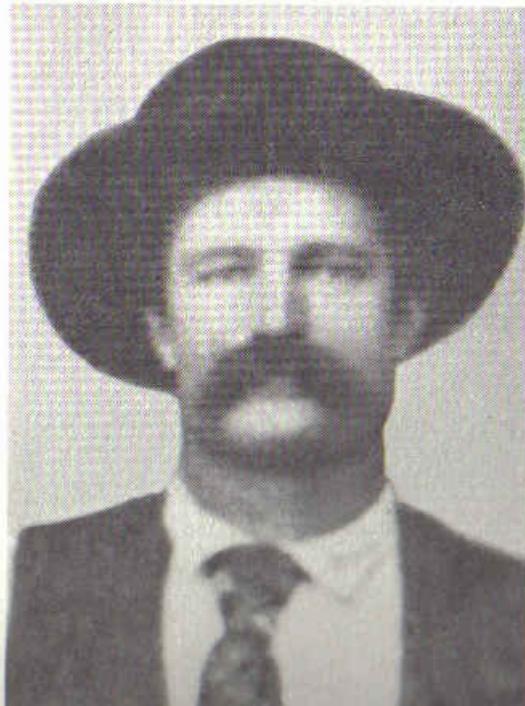
Morgan James, left, and his brother, Jesse James, on visit to Chihuahua, Mexico, 1875.



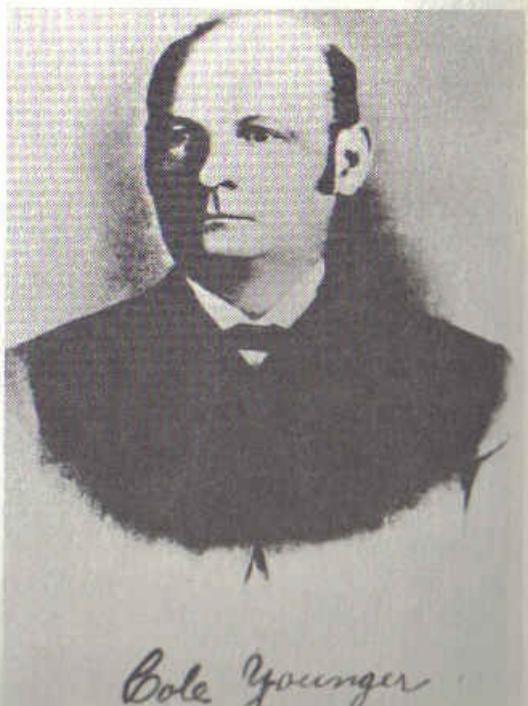
Doc Holliday died of TB.



Wyatt Earp, born in '48.



Jesse James in 1890 visit to Marfa,
Texas.



Cole Younger married Jesse's sister
Rebecca.



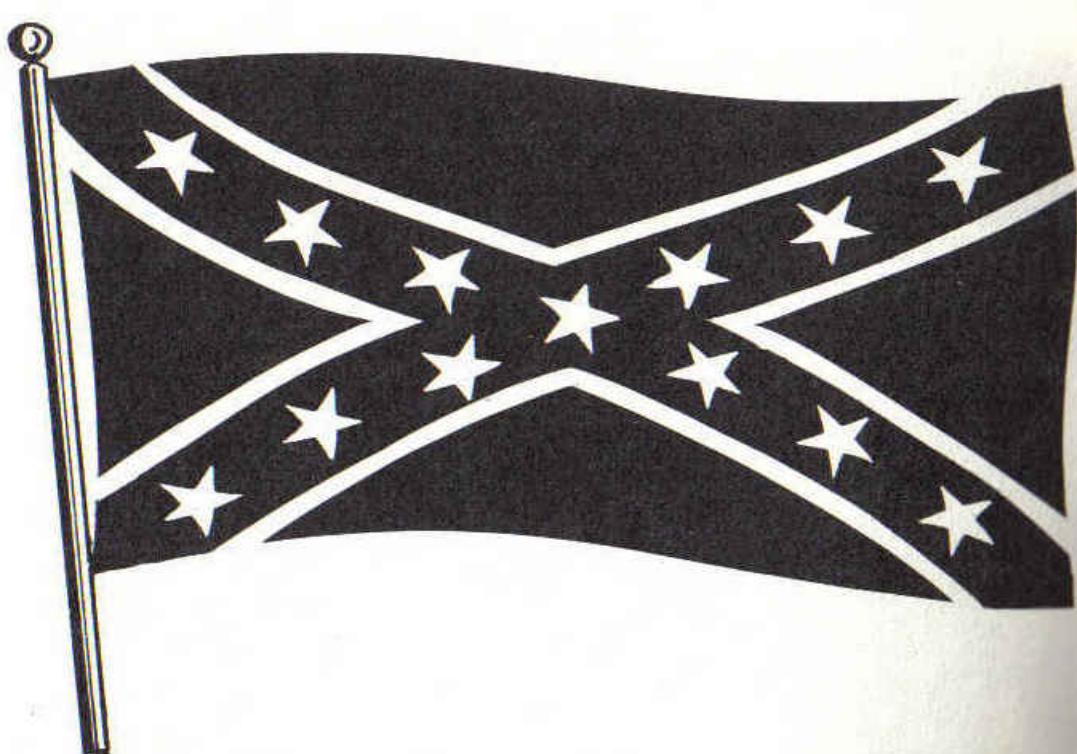
Seated, Bob Dalton, Grat Dalton, Butch Cassidy. Above, Kid Curry and unidentified member of The Wild Bunch.



Trinidad, Colo., 1881; Jesse James, Charlie Smith, John Trammell, M. James, Red Grimshaw, Colo. Slim, F. James.



Dr. Frank James wrote this verse in 1889 after Belle Star, wife of Jesse, died. She was an ex-Rebel spy.



Until his death at 107, Jesse James was a never-say-die Confederate, but prided himself as being "good American."

OFFICIAL SCENIC HISTORIC MARKER

**VALVERDE
BATTLEFIELD**

The first major encounter of the Civil War on New Mexican soil occurred at Valverde on February 21, 1862. Confederate force of Texas volunteers under General J. W. Sibley defeated Union forces stationed at Fort Union. From here Sibley marched northward, was defeated later in Glorieta Pass near Santa Fe.

Dr. William B. Harvey at Civil War battle monument in Glorieta Pass, N.M.

Jefferson Davis, vanquished Confederate president, used alias of John Patterson.



Late Shorty Wallen's view of Jesse climbing last mountain.



John Trammell (Black Cobra) and Eugene Robertson, 1948.



Harris County, Texas, reunion in 1931. From left, El Fago Baca, Gordon (Pawnee Bill) Lilley, Kit Carson III, Jesse James III, Capt. Roy Aldrich and DeWitt Travis.



John Trammell (Black Cobra) and Eugene Robertson, 1948.



Harris County, Texas, reunion in 1931. From left, El Fago Baca, Gordon (Pawnee Bill) Lilley, Kit Carson III, Jesse James III, Capt. Roy Aldrich and DeWitt Travis.



Flora Diamond was boxer Gentleman Jim Corbett's daughter and was related to Jesse James.



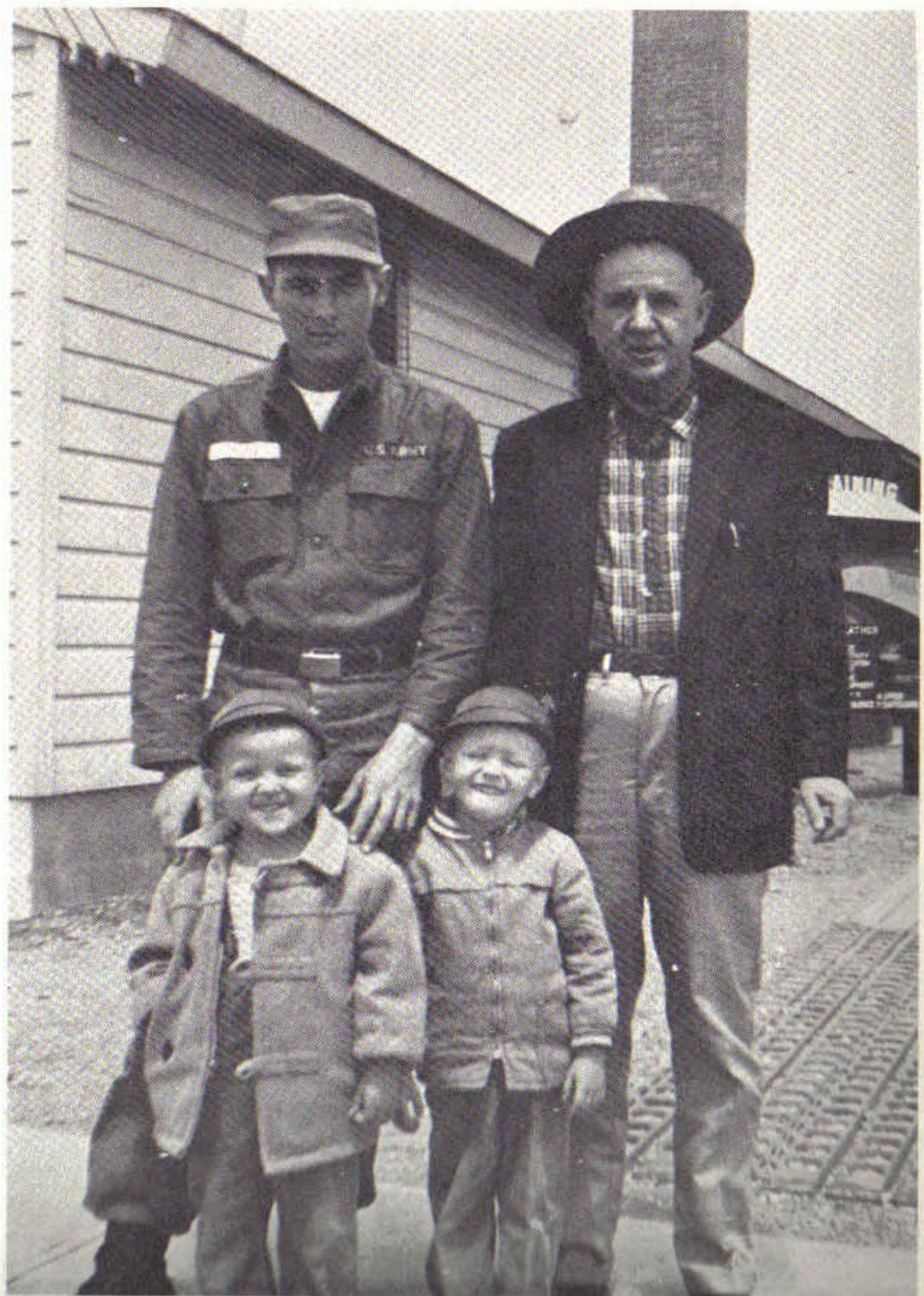
The St. Joseph, Mo., News-Press carried story of finding of "St. Jo bricks" on its front page.



Old plantation house where Jesse James lived as a boy near Frankfort, Ky.
He scrawled name on plastered wall in 1850s.



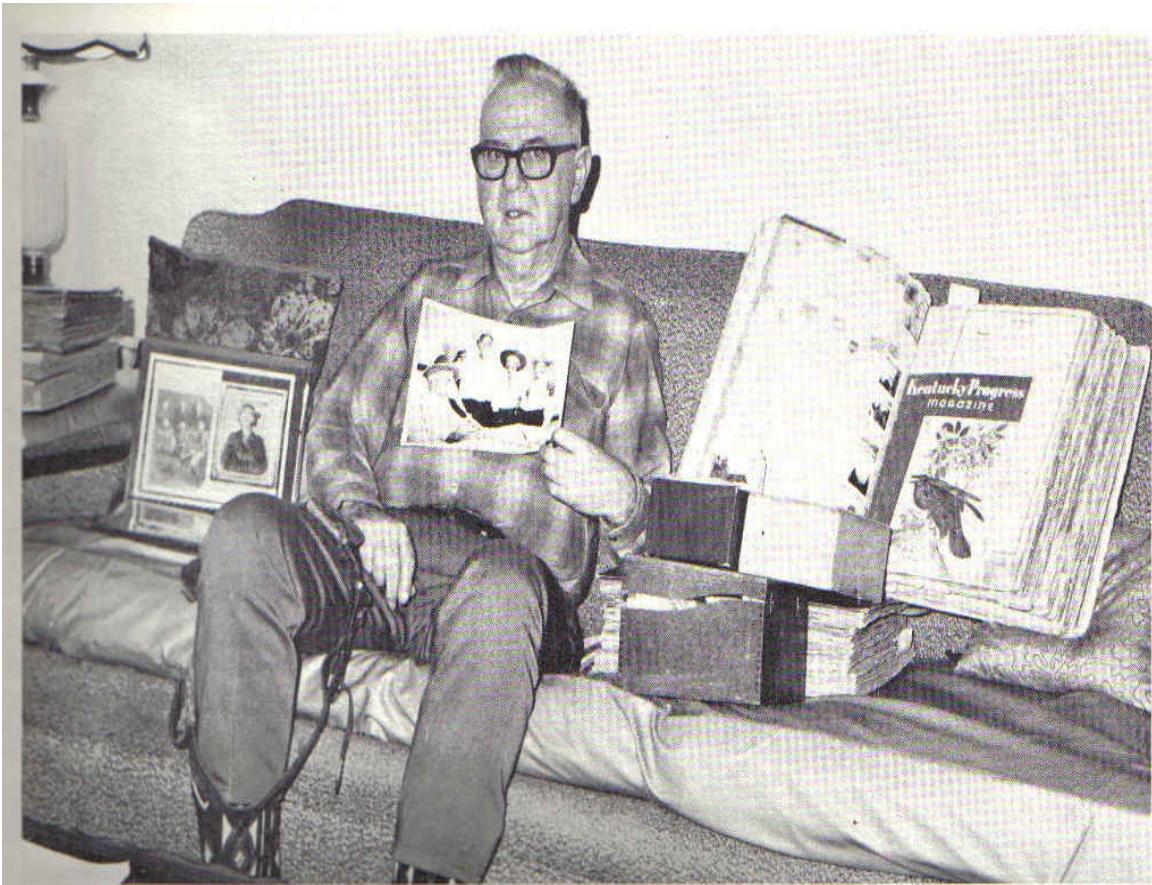
Secretive even in death, Jesse James died in this shanty at Grandbury, Tex.,
1951, and buried in a borrowed grave.



Bottom, Jesse James IV and Woodson James. Rear "Rich" James and Jesse James III.



Del Schrader's great-grandfather, John Anderson Miller, knew "James boys" as early as 1873 in Missouri.



Jesse James III spent more than 40 years collecting and preserving memorabilia of his famous grandfather.



Jesse James III beside painting of famous grandfather and dog, Bounce, at his Beaumont, Calif., home, 1972.



PHOTO BY GUY GOODENOW

Charlie Smith, whom Social Security said was 132 on July 4, 1974, gets Mary Branch kiss on L.A. visit.

and the New Orleans doctor. In a moment he climbed into the ring.

"Gennimen, ahm a New Orleans banker well-known to yo' local banker here. Ah assure yo' mah client, M. Le Blanc is a motty rich man. He owns a big Mississippi River plantation, a big New Orleans warehouse an' assets totallin' moe than a mill-yun dollars. Yo banker here is satisfied wi' his list o' assets, which ah warrantee. M. Le Blanc say his Choc-late Boy whop not oney yo' Sam Skates wi' one punch, but fight ten mo' Gow-ja boys jus' fer suppa money. Lots o' money, come 'n' git it!"

Dr. Frank whispered to Ike Sharp, "At 10-to-1 odds the New Orleans banker is getting only 10 per cent on his money - even if he wins, which he ain't gonna do!"

The bout was delayed for an hour while money was placed, notes were drawn and in some cases money borrowed. If Ike Porter said his Sam Skates could beat Big Boy the Oglethorpe County planters were going along with him. When the New Orleans group ran out of "cover" money, the "smart money boys" from Atlanta sprang into the breech. They offered "plenty of money" giving away 10-to-1 odds. The planters rushed to place their bets.

Throughout the mad rush, Sam Skates sat quietly on his stool, while Ike Porter and Dr. Frank easily massaged his back and arms. Meanwhile, Big Boy, a mocking smile on his face, continued to strut around the ring like he owned the State of Georgia.

Then the referee, who'd been drinking from a hip flask proffered by an Atlanta banker, climbed into the ring. The referee nodded to the timekeeper and a 10-year-old slave boy struck an old dinner gong with a ballpeen hammer and the fight was on. Sam Skates cleverly side-stepped Big Boy's bull-like rush. Big Boy swung two round-house punches but Sam was dancing along the ropes. For two minutes the Delta champion chased the elusive Skates. Dr. Frank nudged Ike Porter, "The big elephant is running out of wind. Another two minutes and he'll die without Sam even hittin' him!"

Catcalls sounded from the New Orleans and Atlanta contingents. A voice rang out, "Sam Skates, yo' ain't no black boy. Yo' yella. Yella stripe up'n yo' back a mile wide!" Another voice sounded, "Stand 'n' fight, yo' black bastid!"

The Delta champion kept up the chase, swinging wildly with his massive arms. Skates danced in and out and skipped away. He was waiting for the opening that Dr. Frank had promised him would come.

Big Boy thought he had Sam trapped in a neutral corner. He moved in, flailing with both hands, but Sam merely bobbed and weaved. With the champion off balance, Sam stood up and delivered a stinging left and right to the champion's jaw. Big Boy half twisted. Then Sam caught him with another sharp left and a crunching right just below Big Boy's left ear.

There was a snap like a pistol shot and the champion thudded to the floor. He lay there

kicking like a rooster with his head cut off. Both Dr. Frank and the New Orleans doctor reached Big Boy at the same second. Dr. Frank straightened up and said hoarsely, "This man is dead!"

The whole barn was in an uproar. It was unbelievable but a skinny country boy from Oglethorpe County, Georgia, had not only whipped, but killed the vaunted Delta champion from New Orleans!

Le Blanc was screaming in two or three languages, demanding the loan of a pistol so he could dispatch the skinny kid who had "murdered" his great champion. Finally, Le Blanc scrambled into the ring. Instead of attacking Sam Skates, the Frenchman tried to jump on Dr. Frank's back. The Kentuckian side-stepped him and slapped Le Blanc sharply on each cheek. The outraged Le Blanc sank to his knees and then fell into a heap sobbing hysterically.

Ike Porter summoned an overseer who got together a burial crew and it took six slaves to carry Big Boy's lifeless body out to the slaves' cemetery where a hole was hastily dug and the former champion laid to rest.

Big Boy had been buried an hour before all bets were settled up. The New Orleans banker wrote more than \$1 million in notes that afternoon. Le Blanc was wiped out financially. The banker reportedly lost \$250,000, while the New Orleans doctor lost \$100,000. The Atlanta contingent lost heavily, too. Shortly before the opening gong sounded several made side bets, giving 10-to-1 odds. The Porter boys realized a cool \$500,000 and Dr. Frank tucked \$50,000 away.

Ike Porter and his brothers made more than \$2 million off Skates' fists before the War Between the States started, but Sunday afternoon, Nov. 13, 1853, was the high spot. The Black Cobra became a legend and never again did they receive 10-to-1 odds.

In 1859, Ike Porter brought Sam Skates to Kentucky for an important fight in a Louisville tobacco warehouse. Ike and Sam spent the two weeks before the bout at the James plantation between Frankfort and Louisville. Skates and young Jesse Woodson James became friends from the start and Jesse was in his corner the night he killed the "Ohio River Valley champion" in one minute, flat. Porter brought his champion back to the James plantation and they dallied a week. Jesse took Sam over to Mother Rebecca's house and the trio talked an hour.

Mother Rebecca predicted, "Sam, you will live a very dangerous, but long life. You will not have much money or fame, but you will give and receive great loyalty. And what can be more precious than friends!"

Sam Skates had about fifty fights before the war broke. What Jesse James was with his pistols, Sam Skates was with his fists. No man ever left the ring alive when he traded blows with Skates. If his opponents didn't die of brain or neck injuries their hearts were stopped by blows to the rib cage.

When the news reached the Porter plantation that Ft. Sumter had surrendered, the Porter brothers were at the table. They calmly finished breakfast, got up, shook hands and began to pack. Two rode north to join the Union Army, while Ike and another brother rode to join the Confederates. Right behind Ike was The Black Cobra, riding a spirited horse. No longer was he the bareknuckle champion, but his beloved Ike Porter's personal servant.

While Ike Porter rose to the rank of general, Sam Skates was wounded twice by Yankee bullets. Somebody had given him a double-barreled, over-and-under rifle. Firing cartridges, breech-loader style, Sam became a deadly marksman. During the latter days of the war with food at a premium, Sam would take his trusty rifle out in the woods and blow the head off a squirrel at 50 yards.

When General Lee surrendered, Ike Porter and Sam Skates were at Cat Springs, Texas. It was here that Ike, physically ill and dejected, gave Sam his freedom. He gave Sam \$200 in gold and suggested he change his name to John Trammell after the Trammell family of Henderson, Texas, famous freight haulers over what was known as The Trammell Trace.

Ike knew his once grand plantation in Georgia was in ruins and he believed that twice-wounded Sam Skates, although only 30, had passed his prime as a fighter. Throughout the war, Sam had often told him how much he admired Jesse James. To avoid the malaria-stricken Deep South, Ike decided to head home via Arkansas and Tennessee.

In eastern Tennessee they ran into Dr. Frank James, who promptly treated Ike Porter with such medicine as was available. When John Trammell asked Dr. Frank's help in finding Jesse, the Kentuckian replied, "Well, I've heard two reports. One has Jesse dead and the other says he's in a Yankee prison. Tell you what, I'm bound for Nashville. Throw in with me. I can't tell you why, John, but if Jesse's alive, he'll eventually end up in Nashville."

A year or so later, John Trammell did meet up with Jesse in Nashville and never left his side for the next 50 years. In the 1930s after Trammell was pensioned off by Jesse the old outlaw said, "Old John Trammell slowed down a little, but he is the ageless type of man."

Jesse, who loved sports, was not unreceptive to promoting an occasional fight for Trammell. He fought perhaps fifty times for Jesse and won them all by knockouts. No stranger to combat or death, Jesse nevertheless didn't particularly encourage The Black Cobra to always kill his opponent. "Kill him, only if he asks for it," was Jesse's advice to Trammell.

In 1882, John L. Sullivan became the last of the London Prize Ring or bareknuckle champions. In 1884, when Trammell was 49 Jesse sent an agent to Sullivan with a \$25,000 offer to fight Trammell. The agent reported Sullivan said, "No Nigger will ever become champion of the world. Besides, The Black Cobra has a reputation for being a mean sort of bastard. The answer is no."

But in 1908, Jack Johnson, a Negro, became heavyweight champion. Jesse again sent an

agent seeking a "two or three-round exhibition with Trammell before a few friends." Johnson looked longingly at the money, but said, "I've heard about the Black Cobra. I don't get into the ring with any kind of snakes - humans is bad enough." Johnson didn't know it but John Trammell was 73 and "fit as a fiddle." Jesse was crestfallen. "I'm sure old Trammell would have given Jack Johnson a lump or two. Poor John - he was born fifty years too soon."

When Trammell greeted the "emerged" Jesse James in Oklahoma in 1948, Jesse's blue eyes twinkled and he said, "Hey, John, you know Joe Louis is getting kinda old. I think maybe you could whoop him." Old Trammell grinned. "Yeah, trouble is, Colonel, I'se gettin' kinda old, too." John Trammell was 113.

Jesse was the star attraction, but he told a couple of reporters present, "You fellows probably aren't sportswriters and you've probably never heard of John Trammell, The Black Cobra, but let me tell you something. I've been ringside and have seen all the modern Negro heavyweights fighters, including Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Ezzard Charles and Jersey Joe Walcott. Yup, I've seen 'em all.

"I think only Joe Louis in his prime would have given John Trammell in his prime a run for his money, but I have no doubt The Black Cobra would have put Joe Louis away in the third or fourth round. The world will never really know what a great fighter Trammell was, but I know what a good friend Trammell has been, and still is, to Jesse James, this old white-haired fellow with a broken hip who's lying here dying. They just don't make men like John Trammell any more - and that's a pity."



Pancho Villa was an ally of Golden Circle.

Wild Bill Lincoln was present at Booth death in 1903.

Chapter 10

Panco Villa Wore a Golden Circle

Old Colonel Jesse Woodson James never allowed a Roman Catholic in the Inner Sanctum of The Knights of the Golden Circle because he feared the confessional. When it is disclosed that Jesse and the Golden Circle aided the so-called Mexican bandit, Gen. Pancho Villa, an anti-Church revolutionist, there will be those who will nod their heads and say, "That's natural."

Jesse feared the confessional and Pancho Villa wanted to break up the Catholic Church's huge land holdings. Obvious allies? Not really. It wasn't Jesse's or the Confederate Underground's love for Pancho Villa as much as their hatred for Porfirio Diaz, the soldier-politician and one of the most durable public figures in Mexican history.

Diaz began his military career as a young soldier in the Mexican-American War. A host of Confederate officers, including Robert Edward Lee, Quantrill, Jefferson Davis and George James, Jesse's father, invaded Mexico in that conflict.

General Diaz was commander of the Mexican patriots who fought against the rule of Emperor Maximilian. Despite being twice captured and exiled in France, Diaz was a hardy soul and returned to overthrow Maximilian with the full blessing of President Lincoln and the Union State Department. It was Diaz who ordered Emperor Maximilian executed and Diaz died in 1915 probably thinking he had done so. He did not know that Maximilian had been safely smuggled into the United States.

When Colonel Jesse James and Colonel William Clarke Quantrill rescued General J. O. Shelby's cavalrymen and carted away Maximilian's treasure, Diaz knew who headed the rescue forces which slaughtered his Mexican patriots by the thousands. Jesse and Quantrill were strong leaders of the Golden Circle so Porfirio Diaz was high on the list of hated enemies.

In 1904 Diaz was elected to his seventh term as President of Mexico and he did a remarkable job in advancing the growth of his nation. Diaz couldn't abide Francisco (Pancho) Villa, who was born Doroteo Arango at Las Nieves, Mexico, in 1877. Diaz labeled Villa a "fat clown" as well as a "bandit" and had him outlawed in the first decade of the 20th Century.

Jesse hated Diaz with a passion, especially after an episode in 1910, a year before Diaz resigned the Presidency. Jesse owned a huge ranch in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. Under Diaz' direct orders his federal troops attacked Jesse's ranch without warning and slaughtered a couple of hundred cowboys and workers. Only three escaped the massacre. They were Jesse's son, Jesse F. B. James, an Indian servant and Brushy Bill Roberts, alias Billy the Kid. Roberts was ranch manager, having only recently returned from an illfated tour of South America with the Wild West Show headed by Butch Cassidy and the

Sundance Kid.

This same year, 1910, Pancho Villa launched his first revolution. Some wondered if Jesse and the Confederate Underground had been supplying Villa with arms and Diaz had gotten wind of it and decided to strike down an old American enemy. This seems unlikely because Jesse W. James wasn't one who would leave his own son and longtime friend, Brushy Bill Roberts, deep in Diaz territory as sitting ducks. His cowboys, part American and part Mexican, weren't trained guerrilla fighters but were working cowhands. And the Chihuahua ranch wasn't a Golden Circle front, but Jesse's personal property.

By this time Jesse was running the Golden Circle with an iron hand and the Confederate Underground acted swiftly after hearing a report by Jesse's son and Brushy Bill. Roberts, who had once been married to a Mexican woman, spoke perfect Spanish as did Jesse James. Dressed as Mexicans and heavily armed with pistol harnesses, Jesse and Brushy Bill, accompanied by four Spanish-speaking agents, rode into Mexico. "I was madder than a hornet," Jesse said in later years, "and I wanted vengeance against Diaz. The deeper we got into Mexico the more we began hearing about Pancho Villa. It seemed everybody was against Villa but the people of Mexico. We had one hell of a time catching up with him."

Finally a meeting was arranged, and Jesse and Pancho Villa talked for two days and two nights. Before the American offered him any money or support, he wanted to know more about Villa's organization. The Mexican was cagey and Jesse at first figured Villa was deliberately underplaying his strength. While they talked, he couldn't believe Villa was a serious revolutionist. He had practically no organization, no particular goals and his idea of Latin chivalry disturbed Jesse. It appeared to Jesse that Villa was more interested in becoming a romantic hero or colorful legend than in taking over Porfirio Diaz's Presidential seat.

Did Pancho Villa need money? No, the peasants fed and hid his small band. Did he need weapons? No, he could always steal them from federal arsenals or supply trains. Could he use some Confederate Underground officers to help train troops? No, because fighting in Mexico was different; there were no large battles. What did he need then? Pancho stood up, grinned and replied, "Your friendship and tolerance, Senor." The two men set up a future meeting, but Jesse's heart wasn't in it. Pancho Villa couldn't defeat the hated Diaz in a million years. Jesse couldn't wait to get out of Mexico.

Back in Van Zandt County, Texas, Jesse had an idea. Turning to Brushy Bill Roberts he said, "Billy, I'm going to have some of our old Confederate officers and agents of The Organization put you through a crash course in military strategy and tactics. Diaz is 80 years old and can't last forever. He's been in office so long no strong man has emerged. When Diaz lets go, Mexico might be in for trouble. I'm going to avenge the Chihuahua ranch and maybe Pancho Villa, who is still a young man of 33, might grow up and get some sense. You go on The Organization payroll tomorrow as a captain."

Brushy Bill smiled and then gave him a salute. "Aye, aye, Colonel!"

Jesse wasn't amused. "If I could just get that gallant Senor Villa up here and pound some military horse sense into him, we might have a chance."

In 1911, Diaz resigned. He was followed by what Jesse considered three weakling Presidents in four years - De La Barra, Madero and Huerta. In 1915, the U.S. Government recognized Venustiano Carranza as President of Mexico. One of Carranza's first acts was to outlaw his chief rival, revolutionist Pancho Villa, who had first been outlawed by former President Diaz.

Beginning in 1910, Jesse met four times with Pancho Villa, while De La Barra, Madero and Huerta struggled with the Presidency and failed. The chief of the Golden Circle tried to impress upon Villa the importance of moving into the power vacuum, but Villa talked blithely of allying himself with Carranza, whom he felt he could trust. Instead of counting his troops in the hundreds, General Villa now talked of thousands.

"Are you sure, General Villa, that Carranza isn't setting you up for the double-cross?" Jesse asked.

Villa replied, "No, Senor, Carranza can be trusted. I'm sorry, but you just don't understand Mexican politics."

Jesse muttered, "I'm trying to figure out just who in hell does understand Mexican politics, including you."

The Golden Circle chief offered General Villa the use of Captain Brushy Bill Roberts, whom Jesse now considered well trained in cavalry tactics. But Villa declined. "I have to say no at this time, Senor. A gringo captain might turn the people against my cause." It is not clear if Villa recommen

ded Colonel James to Venustiano Carranza or not, but Carranza's agents contacted Jesse. A meeting was arranged and the Mexican said, "Mexico is having its troubles, Senor, but we must look ahead to the day when peace returns."

Learning that Jesse was a "railroad builder," Carranza tossed Colonel James some bait and the American went for it. Carranza wanted a short line built in the State of Chihuahua. It was incredible; such a line would benefit Jesse's big ranch.

At a second meeting (probably in Juarez across the Rio Grande River from El Paso) Carranza, who was not yet President of Mexico, asked for "good faith money" and Jesse gave him \$2 million in gold. The understanding was that Colonel James' railroad would not be taxed for twenty years. As part of the deal with Carranza, Jesse's huge ranch was guaranteed "protection" by Carranza's forces. "Your cowboys need not go armed, Senor, because there is no need," Carranza said.

"If it pleases the General," Jesse replied, "I'd feel better if they remained armed."

Carranza shrugged, "As you wish, Senor. They will be free to go and come as they wish." With that, the men shook hands and Carranza gathered up the \$2 million in gold and left.

Jesse neglected to inform Carranza that Captain Brushy Bill Roberts, Jesse's twin sons, and about 150 of the toughest American gun-slingers old Jesse could dig up in Texas and New Mexico, were already secretly drilling at his Chihuahua ranch. And The Knights of the Golden Circle, its members if; wise and wealthy, but old, were nearing the end of the line.

It was the last gasp of the Golden Circle. Some of the agents in their 70s and 80s, together with younger hired operatives, spread a spy network over the northern half of Mexico. Six months after Jesse's secret meeting with Carranza, Golden Circle oldtimers reported to Jesse in Canton, Texas, that Carranza was about to double-cross both him and General Villa. So Jesse didn't send a single piece of heavy railroad building equipment across the Rio Grande. But Carranza had Jesse's \$2 million and Jesse cursed his own stupidity.

Carranza's forces launched simultaneous attacks against General Villa's headquarters and Jesse's Chihuahua ranch. The fat was in the fire! Warned by Mexican peasants, General Villa had slipped away and Carranza found only empty rooms at the bandit chiefs headquarters.

It was a different story at the Chihuahua ranch. Led by Brushy Bill, the Americans, armed not only with pistol harnesses but with mortars and hand grenades, inflicted heavy losses on Carranza's attackers. Outnumbered 20-to-1, Brushy Bill envisioned another Alamo, so his men headed for the American border, fighting a sturdy rearguard action as they went. Captain Roberts had less than one-third of his men left when he reached Texas.

Old Jesse was furious, but he had half expected the double-cross. More incensed was the somewhat idealistic, naive Pancho Villa. When he met with Jesse, Villa this time begged for munitions, men and money. Jesse employed several thousand Mexican-Americans on his Texas ranches and 300-400 volunteered to fight for Villa. Villa sent twenty of his best young officers to Texas and Jesse, several old exConfederate Army officers and Brushy Bill emphasized artillery. Jesse reasoned the Texas Mexicans were excellent riders and good shots, but Villa needed the "heavy stuff." Cannons were rolled out of secret caches and more were suddenly "acquired."

Villa's chief of staff, Gen. L. L. (El Gringo) Duprey, twice visited the secret training grounds on Jesse's Texas ranch and was pleased with what he saw. One thing troubled him. "Colonel James, how do you propose to get heavy cannon, mortars and grenades into Mexico?"

Jesse smiled confidently. "That's my problem, General. You tell me where you want this stuff and I'll get it there."

Old General Duprey, still alive and residing in Georgetown, Texas, on July 15, 1965, verified most of the details of Jesse James' support of General Villa, but he had met several times with the old Confederate prior to Jesse's death in 1951 and had been surprised at the old man's cunning.

"Colonel James gave General Villa first-class support, and the fact we didn't win was the result of our own mistakes. I'm afraid we found out too late that we weren't fighting a first-class war. We undoubtedly under-estimated Carranza's ability and over-estimated our own strength with the masses," Duprey told Jesse James III, who got the old man on several television shows.

Jesse III says old Jesse got a relative, Dr. Staunton L. James, who in 1972 was residing in Thermopolis, Wyoming, installed as a captain of the Border Patrol. As a result, Jesse's supply wagons and trucks were waved across the Rio Grande. Mexican Customs officials were either bribed or sympathetic to Pancho Villa's cause and looked the other way.

Braced with Golden Circle money, guns, medicine, horses and men, Pancho Villa made a run for victory and soon large areas of northern Mexico fell under his control. Villa began expropriating the Catholic Church's vast lands and dividing them up among the peasants. His fame spread throughout Mexico.

What happened to the \$2 million Jesse had given Carranza? Golden Circle agents and General Villa's spies in Carranza's camp reported Carranza had purchased \$2 million in arms from a Chicago munitions salesman for delivery to Vera Cruz on the Gulf of Mexico. But the gold, placed in two safes and secreted in a piano box, would cross the Rio Grande and be transported by rail to Chicago. At the American port of entry, the gold suddenly disappeared in a coup engineered by the old fox, Jesse James. He undoubtedly was aided by information supplied by Dr. Staunton L. James and others.

But loss of the \$2 million didn't hamper Carranza. He was already getting secret help from the State Department in Washington. President Woodrow Wilson, with an anxious eye on World War I which was raging in Europe, was being told by Carranza's agents that Pancho Villa was being supplied money and guns by Kaiser Wilhelm. It is doubtful if Wilson believed such tales, but American investors in Mexico were demanding "stability" south of the border.

One of the "mistakes" General Pancho Villa made was to sign a contract with Hollywood to film "Pancho Villa's War." The late Dick Burrud, father of Bill Burrud, well-known television personality, was one of the cameramen sent to Mexico to film Villa's activities. Was Villa a vain and publicity-seeking man or did he think the film would gain public support for him in the United States?

I've heard the story of the filming from Dick Burrud's own lips. "I always thought it was a strange way to fight a war. We were using slow film in those days - Hollywood was more or less in its infancy. Pancho Villa would want to raid a Carranza-held town at dusk. I'd go to Villa and say, 'The light is too poor, Senor Villa.' The man was completely

cooperative. He'd say, 'Muy bien, Senor Burrud, we will attack in the morning when the light is better for your cameras.'"

Burrud disclosed that Villa also liked "a lot of close-ups of himself." Burrud's crew, many times under fire, managed to grind out thousands of feet of authentic action film. Burrud recalled, "Pancho, his officers and men took direction well and seldom missed a cue." After a skirmish, when Villa's men should have been resting, Burrud's cameramen would get them up on their horses for close and medium footage. Indeed, it was a strange way to run a war. In 1923 when Villa was 'assassinated', the Mexican Government called for Burrud to identify the body, but he claimed the body was not that of Pancho Villa."

Old Jesse James always said, and General Duprey agreed, the turning point in Pancho Villa's revolution came when Villa and about a thousand followers "raided" the border town of Columbus, New Mexico, setting fire to houses and killing several American citizens. The "attack" took place March 9, 1916.

President Wilson, reacting to public outcry, sent a punitive expedition of 6,000 officers and men under Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing. The force crossed the border at Columbus on March 15 with orders to capture Villa dead or alive. A clash between American troops and Villa followers took place on April 12 at Parral, Mexico, resulting in diplomatic entanglements. Mexican public opinion resented the invasion by "The Colossus of the North" and President Wilson ordered General Pershing to give up the chase and return to U.S. soil, but called out various National Guard units to guard the entire border with Mexico. Green Guardsmen thoroughly searched everything and everybody going into or coming out of Mexico, limiting Jesse James' supplies bound for Villa's forces.

Did Pancho Villa really raid Columbus, New Mexico? Jesse's agents and old General Duprey said the incursion was staged by Carranza to whip up anti-Villa sentiment in the United States. "Why else," old Duprey asked, "were the bodies of five Jesuit priests found among slain Villa 'followers'? The Church wouldn't touch Villa with a ten-foot pole. Hadn't he expropriated their lands in areas he controlled?"

History relates that Pancho Villa was mysteriously assassinated in 1923 at the age of 46. I have traveled extensively in most of Mexico over a period of many years and the legend is that Villa's double was killed in 1923. Almost twenty years ago I was taking a picture of Villa's home in Chihuahua and found a Mexican extremely helpful. As I prepared to put away my camera the old Mexican, who said he was a cousin of Villa, asked softly, "Senor, why do you come to Mexico to take a photograph of Senor Villa's house when you could go to New Mexico in your own country and take a picture of General Villa himself?" The Knights of the Golden Circle, perhaps smarting from backing a loser in Mexico, closed down and sealed the records in 1916. But The Organization run by Jesse James still flourished in 1923 and in fact in years later. Old Jess always remembered a friend and never forgot an enemy.

Jesse, then approximately 70 years of age, occasionally joined General Villa's forces for some gun play. Jesse, who had a life-long mutual admiration going with the Indians, had

been introduced to the fierce Yaqui Indians living in the mountains of Sonora, Mexico, by General Villa. Even as an old man, Jesse would disappear from his favorite haunts for several months at a time. He would visit the Yaquis and try to help them. The Yaquis had literally tons of hidden gold, but advanced little past the aboriginal stage. Jesse sent several of their brightest young men to school in the United States and they became doctors. But instead of returning to the Yaqui Nation they established practices in the bright cities - much to Jesse's chagrin. Old Jesse was a mystic and some oldtimers said he had "second sight" like the old Negress, Mother Rebecca. In 1922 on the way home from a visit to the Yaqui Nation, Jesse stopped to see Pancho Villa, who was living more or less openly in a small village in the mountains of Sonora.

"You're a damn fool, Pancho," he told the former revolutionist, "and you've done a lot of stupid things in your life. But your life won't be worth a plugged old nickel if the Mexican Government pays \$10 to one of the lovable peons to shoot you in the back. I'm putting my foot down. The Golden Circle and I invested millions of dollars in you, so you listen to me. We're getting you a double. Don't worry, I'll pick up the tab, because I've had plenty of experience in this kind of business. Then we'll smuggle you across the border. I have considerable property in New Mexico where you can hide out safely. I want you to get out of Mexico, and I don't want any of your silly arguments!"

A month later, General Villa was safe in New Mexico, living comfortably on a trust fund set up by old Jesse. A double was found who somewhat resembled Villa. Instead of living a quiet, unassuming life, the double enjoyed his role and began telling Mexican villagers he was "the real Pancho Villa." In 1923 the double was shot in the back by a cowardly assassin, but General Villa had been safely living in New Mexico for more than a year.

Old Jesse did a tremendous amount of meddling in international affairs and perhaps God alone knows the amount of mischief caused by the outlaw and the Golden Circle underground.



The Longley home in Texas. Wild Bill Longley escaped death in the post-Civil War era by a ruse.

Chapter 11

A Robin Hood With Humour?

Jesse James was one of his names. And it was Howard. He robbed the rich of every stitch. You bet, he was no coward.

This was one of the verses Bill Gashade put in the song he wrote following the "murder" of Jesse W. James in St. Joseph, Missouri, on April 3, 1882. Writers of the purple prose lost no time in listing Jesse's "good deeds" and billions of words were ground out about this legendary Robin Hood. But when he "emerged" in 1948 after 66 years of hiding, Jesse told the press, "I was no knight in shining armor like Robin Hood. Sure, I helped out folks when I could, but a lot of lies and fiction were written about my so-called good deeds.

"I wasn't sharing my 'loot' with anybody. It all went into Confederate depositories in case there was a Second Civil War - I'd taken an oath to do that. Of course, I had my own personal fortune - if I wanted to use some of that to help out folks, well, that was my business. But I never boasted about helping people or about men I killed - writers just dreamed up a lot of this stuff."

One of the most publicized stories concerned "Jesse James and the Widow Woman." Each historian has managed to come up with a new twist or a fresh angle. In the mid1920s, Robertus Love, widely-known St. Louis newsman, repeated the incident and added this comment: "I believe it most implicitly. I for one shall continue to applaud his achievement. There was a pathos in it, there was chivalric sentiment, there was simply human tenderness... and there was humor."

Jesse James III recalls, "Grandpa told us the story about the widow several times. He had written it down and somewhere I have the original. I also wrote his version down in his own manner of speaking which at times could be quite salty. It also has a surprise ending."

It was in 1864 and Jesse W. James and his guerrillas were heading north from Louisiana knocking over Union Army supply wagons and robbing paymasters. In Arkansas, Jesse's guerrillas had linked up with Quantrill's men in a major confrontation with Northern soldiers and then they had scattered, breaking up into smaller units.

Captain James and half a dozen guerrillas headed north into Missouri through West Plains and then to the Willow Springs area. Riding along a dusty road on a hot summer day the men came to a spring. A spout ran about fifteen feet above the road and emptied into a horse trough. While their mounts drank, Jesse tried to find a dipper or a can so his men could drink.

The old man recalled, "I told my men that I was going to step over the rail fence, walk up the trail to the house and ask to borrow a dipper. When I reached the front of the log

house, I noticed the latch-string was pulled in, so I walked around to the back.

"Several children of various ages were playing there, but upon seeing an armed stranger, a couple of them fled into the woods. I smiled at the little girl who stayed. She was a freckle-faced little girl with long braids, clean, dressed in rags and about 10 years old.

"She told me her name was Mary and then yelled for her mother to come out. Being vigilant, I noted many things about her mother when she came out and handed me a dipper made from a gourd. I thanked her and promised I would fetch the dipper right back to her.

"After we had slaked our thirst, I said, 'Boys, there is something wrong up at that house. She was crying like her heart would break. Couple of you come with me while I return the dipper - maybe we can figure out what's wrong.'

"After we apologized for prying into her private affairs, the lady cried even harder. But finally we learned her story. Her husband had joined the Confederate Army under General Price. After being in uniform several months, he had gotten badly shot up and his comrades brought him home to either survive or die. He died of infection after several months.

"The widow said there were no provisions made for wounded Rebel soldiers so she had to raise money for medicines, a doctor and food for her children. She finally rode into Willow Springs, saw the banker who loaned her \$150, tacking on another \$10 as his fee, plus 10 per cent interest per year.

"She paid the first year's interest by selling her husband's guns. Then, to get food, she sold his saddle horse, a cow and everything she could get a dollar on. But her husband died anyway, leaving her with six kids, a few chickens, no milk cow, no mule, no horse. Neighbours tried to plant a crop for her, but dry weather burned it up. So that very day, about noon, the banker and the sheriff would arrive to either collect or take over her farm.

"Excusing ourselves, we went back to the road and the seven of us had a pow-wow. Somehow, we managed to scrape up \$160, plus another \$20. I took the money back and handed it to the widow, every dollar in either gold or silver, telling her that while we were poor farm boys, we knew the times were hard. I told her that sometimes we went several days without food and our own mothers back home had to put up with insults and indignities from roving bands of guerrillas or Yankees on the prod."

Then Captain James patiently explained to the widow that she should get a receipt from the banker that the loan was paid in full and the sheriff would sign with the banker. Then she should pay the sheriff his fee and get a receipt for that. The widow profusely thanked the handsome, 20-year-old captain and was drying her tears when he went to rejoin his men.

Old Jesse resumed his story. "We hid in the woods, just off the road and waited. Sure enough, about 1 p.m. here came a buggy with the sheriff driving and the banker, wearing a top hat and coat, hunched beside him. They stopped at the spring, got out and walked up the trail to the house, about 150 feet away.

"In about forty-five minutes, more or less, they came down the hill, got into the buggy, turned around and came toward where we were waiting. When the buggy reached my hiding place I stepped out into the road with a pistol in one hand and ordered the sheriff to stop.

"He pulled the reins up tight and asked, 'What's this, Jesse, a holdup?' I replied, 'Nope, Sheriff, it ain't a holdup. I just want that damned bandy-legged leech riding there beside you. You just sit still, Sheriff, and I won't shoot you -but I will shoot that lowdown skunk, if he don't get down and stand up like a man! Any SOB like him who is so damnable heartless and greedy and who would evict a poor, lone widow woman with all those kids should be shot and gutted like a fat hog!"

Captain James aimed his pistol at the banker's right eye. The banker began whimpering and bellowing and began crawling down from the buggy. Instead, he fell to the ground.

Old Jesse recalled, "The SOB was groveling, pawing the ground with his fingers and begging for his miserable, worthless life. The Sheriff seemed to notice that I wasn't alone so he then started begging for his life, too, saying he was merely doing his bonded duty. He got out and sat down on the road beside the banker, both of them shedding big tears.

"After a few moments I realized the Sheriff wasn't really crying. He was putting on an act and getting a big kick out of this drama. Actually, he was laughing to himself and he was on my side.

"I went over, peeled the coat and money belt off the banker. I took back the \$160 or so we had given the woman, plus all the money he had on him. We later counted it and it totalled more than \$900. Then I kicked the banker in the rump, ordered him back into the buggy and as the Sheriff grabbed the reins I told the banker that if he uttered one peep I'd come after him. I told him I'd ride into Willow Springs some night, yank him out of bed and then shake the whole damn town loose from its foundations. I told the banker to spread the word among his ilk that any further kicking old people or widows out of their homes would bring retaliation from me.

"The Sheriff winked at me, trying hard not to laugh out loud, then drove off at a trot toward Willow Springs. We knew they wouldn't return that day and we had some good laughs while we recounted the money," old Jesse said, his blue eyes twinkling. Tying their horses in the woods, the six guerrillas, led by Captain James, tromped up the hill to the widow's house and freckled-faced Mary summoned her mother.

"Ma'm," Jesse said, "We been doing some thinking. We lent you the mortgage money,

but didn't give you enough to buy seed, hire a good Negro man and buy a span of mules to plow and plant your crop next spring. So we want to lend you another \$900 - but first I'd like to see your receipt from that dadburned banker."

The widow brought out the paper and Jesse read it and nodded his approval, smiling. The woman said, "I'll accept your loan, but first I must give you a receipt for your money, Captain."

"Shucks, lady," Jesse said, "we ain't bankers so legalities won't be necessary- Just a handshake is good enough for us. Being soldiers as we are, we may never get back this away alive. So don't you worry none, Ma'm."

The old man halted his story and leaned back. His broken hip was hurting. "Never did get back there," he told his grandchildren and then he fell asleep. But Jesse James III recalls, "Grandpa may not have gotten back to that farm outside Willow Springs, Missouri, but the sequel to 'Jesse James and the Widow Woman' occurred exactly 84 years later."

In the summer of 1948, after "emerging" in Lawton, Oklahoma, on May 19, Jesse W. James, alias J. Frank Dalton, made a triumphant tour that took him all the way to the West Coast. In Colorado, Jesse III recalls that a caller from a small town in Montana was trying to telephone him, but a connection couldn't be established.

Finally the call got through when Jesse James' party was at the Parkway Hotel in Chicago. Jesse III said, "A frail voice said, 'I married a fine man who was a railroad grading contractor with men, mules and equipment and we were temporarily living in Livingston, Montana, when it was called Clark City. I saw your grandfather, Jesse James, there. He was the same Jesse James I met when I was a freckled-faced little girl near Willow Springs, Missouri, back in 1864 during the War Between the States. I want to meet Jesse James again. My granddaughter and I will get on a train and come to Chicago if you can arrange a visit.'

"I assured the old lady that she could see my Grandpa, but with so much going on I never mentioned the phone call to him. I waited to see what would happen if she did somehow manage to show up at our suite in Chicago.

"Well, a little, frail old lady and her granddaughter showed up four days later. I ushered them into Grandpa's room, but not a word was spoken. I led them around so they could approach Grandpa's hospital bed from his left side so he could see and hear them better.

"The elderly woman smiled broadly. While she stood there facing him, Grandpa gawked, sputtered and looked as if he'd just seen a ghost. Then he snapped his fingers a couple of times and commanded: "Don't speak, don't say a word. Yes. Hello, Mary!"

"Then Mary rushed to his arms amid a flood of tears -Grandpa had recognized her after a span of 84 years! I looked again and Grandpa was crying softly. Once called, 'The bloodiest killer of them all', old Jesse Woodson James* sharp blue eyes were flooded by

memories of an incident of kindness that occurred when he was 20 and Mary was 10. Now she was 94 and he was 104."

When things calmed down, old Jesse and Mary talked about the day so long ago. "The next day," Mary recalled, "the story of how you got the banker was all over the county. But the banker never gave mother any more problems. With the money you men gave her she got her crop in next Spring and the farm prospered."

Mary revealed that she had seen Jesse several times while the railroad was being built through Bozeman Pass. "You were with Major Tucker, who surveyed the route, I wanted so much to talk to you and thank you for your kindness to our family. I knew you were supposed to have been killed in 1882, but I was positive it was you and that you were using an alias. I didn't want to spoil things for you.

"Some years later I told my husband about it, and he told me that he had had many dealings with Jesse James, who hadn't been killed at all. He said you owned the teams and equipment being used at Bozeman Pass, and he was working for you. I remember that he said we could have had you out to dinner where we could have talked about that day on the Missouri farm."

Sometimes Jesse James' attempts at being a Robin Hood backfired. Legend has it that Jesse, who had a soft spot in his heart for Negroes throughout his life, heard that an all-black school in Missouri was about to close because of a lack of money. One night, the legend goes, he tossed a bag containing money over the wall. The next morning, the principal found the money and fearfully turned it over to the police. No historian ever bothered to find out what happened to the money.

Although Jesse James never allowed any Catholics in his inner circle because of what he called "the dangers of the confessional," he certainly wasn't against the Roman Catholic church. In 1915, while visiting his twin sister, Tilly, and her husband, Obediah Howk, in St. Louis, he read about the financial plight of the Catholic Good Shepherd Home for Girls.

Loading his 10-year-old grandson, Jesse James III, who then went under the name of Lee Howk, into a buggy Jesse drove up to the Girls Home and went to the front door with a suitcase in his hand. One of the nuns answered the door and summoned the Mother Superior, who invited the old man and the boy in. As she waved them to be seated in her office, the good woman stared at the old man's long, white hair and beard. She said, "I've seen your face before, sir."

Jesse stirred uneasily in his seat, then grabbed the suitcase and opened it on her desk. The Mother Superior gasped as she saw the money, "Praise be to God!"

"I think," the old man said, "you'll find \$50,000 in there which should help out the unfortunate girls. I gotta be going now."

"But, sir," the Mother Superior said, "your generosity shall not go unreported. I will tell the newspapers about your gracious gift. Tell me your name, sir."

In a cold sweat, Jesse tugged at his grandson's arm and started for the door. "Oh, Ma'm, just tell 'em you got the money from a friend."

The Mother Superior was right behind him. "Oh, sir, I now recognize you - you're Buffalo Bill!"

Jesse sighed with relief. "Yup, that's it, Ma'm. Tell 'em Buffalo Bill the Second gave you the money."

William F. Cody, the Iowa-born showman and bison hunter, was a long time friend of Jesse's. In fact, Jesse had put money into a couple of Cody's Buffalo Bill Wild West Shows. But in 1915, Cody was in bad shape both financially and physically.

The St. Louis newspapers told of Buffalo Bill's generous contribution to the Catholic home and the news went over the "telegraph." Cody, who was in Denver at the time, was mobbed by creditors who had read the story of his generosity in St. Louis. Cody had to deny the yarn.

A couple of days later, the story of Cody's plight got back to St. Louis and at dinner that night Jesse asked his twin sister, Tilly, "What in hell gets into me anyway? I'm too damnable impulsive. I put a gun in the hand of young Jack McCall in Deadwood. I put a gun in the hand of Bob Ford in St. Jo and now I get poor old Bill Cody in trouble in Denver. When I get to Butte I'll send him some money to tide him over."

Literally thousands of poorly-educated Negroes, Indians, Mexican-Americans had never heard of Robin Hood, Sherwood Forest or even England, but they loved Jesse W. James as "that fine man who always helps us out when we need something." I have sworn statements from members of the minority races attesting to this fact.

Throughout his 107 years, Jesse James liked a good joke. Sometimes even after completing an especially deadly task, his sense of humor broke through. A chuckle or a laugh relaxed him and perhaps it enhanced his leadership qualities. Sometimes when things looked the blackest, he would resort to light-hearted quips.

I'm sure that Jesse would have seen some humor in the fact that one of his great-grandsons was kicked out of the Air Force Academy a few years ago for "cheating." And Jesse would have gotten a kick out of a letter written in 1966 by the grandson of one of his men who was badly wounded in the unsuccessful 1876 raid on the Northfield, Minnesota, bank. The grandson wrote to Jesse James III, "Just paid \$20 in traffic fines for my two sons. The trouble never seems to end - but that is life."

In the 1940s J. Frank Dalton, alias Jesse James, went on a lecture series, concentrating on Texas. He told one audience: "I don't know what the going price for blood is today, but

that individual back in St. Jo, Missouri, made a lot of money back in 1882 selling my blood for twenty-five cents a splinter! When he ran out of flooring or blood, he went to the slaughter house for a couple of buckets full and then found plenty of splinters to dip in blood and sold them to the gullible public as mementos!"

To another Texas crowd he said, tongue in cheek, "Only the rich and powerful can indulge in the rare sport of murder. Yes, only the rich can afford such an expensive pastime." To another group: "History, be it said, no matter how strange, would be better written after all the actors are dead." And to yet another audience: "I was no model for young men growing up today - but those were not exactly model times back then either."

Jesse James always blamed the noted financier and railroad magnate Jay Gould for having him outlawed prior to the end of the Civil War. During one lecture he stated, "The Organization and I have been accused of raiding and robbing Jay Gould of perhaps \$30 million in my lifetime. Shucks, we weren't bandits, outlaws, thieves or pirates. We took the position that we were Jay Gould's auditors. He got the money together, and we came along and took care of it for him!"

William S. (Wild Bill) Lincoln, who worked many years for what Jesse called The Organization, on Oct. 1, 1959, said, "Jesse James was jolly, happy-go-lucky, liked his drinks, liked his fun and was generous to his friends - but deadly to his enemies."

During the 1933 oil boom at Gladewater, Texas, old Jesse was reminded by some old ex-Confederate friends that he was drinking damnyankee beer made by the Capone interests. Jesse stood up, summoned the Chinese-American proprietor and said in mock seriousness: "Look-a-here, fellow. Don't you ever try to sell me any more damnyankee beer - because if you do, I'll take my beer drinkin' business elsewhere, you hear?"

Throughout his life, Jesse loved to smoke long, black cigars and he always carried a couple of plugs of Mickey Twist chewing tobacco. At Lawton, Oklahoma, in 1948, Old Jesse had just taken a big chaw of tobacco when a man, one of thousands of the curious, approached and said, "I don't care what they-all say, you're Jesse James all right. You chew tobacco jus' like you do in the movies!" With that, old Jesse roared so loudly he almost lost his chaw.

During 1948, letters poured in by the thousands from Jesse James fans all over the world. The historians, the "experts" and the doubters claimed the old man was an "impostor," but millions of people wanted to believe he was the real Jesse James.

Frank C. Ogan, of Pasadena, California, wrote: "Dear Jesse: I met you about 8:30 a.m., March 25, 1882, in Atchison, Kansas, when you rode into town on a fine brown horse wearing a derby hat and a long-tailed coat. You also wore a Van Dyke... I was a boy about 12 working in a small cigar store... You bought some cigars from me, but your quarter was (made of) lead. I had to make it good out of my weekly pay, which was \$1.50 per week... I say you owe me 25 cents and the interest for 66 years... But if you are the real Jesse James (my boyhood hero) I will cancel your debt on your next birthday!"



Golden Circle treasure sign.

Dr. William Harvey, Nashville.



Chalked-in JJ (Jesse James) and Younger names.

Chapter 12

The Knights of The Golden Circle

One of the deadliest, wealthiest, most secretive and efficient spy and underground organizations in the history of the world was The Knights of the Golden Circle, which operated over the globe for sixty-five years (1851-1916). Ranking below the Golden Circle in this order were The Knights of the Golden Stirrup, The Knights of the White Camellias, The Knights of the Inner Circle, The Knights of the Outer Circle and The International Anti-Horse Thief Association (TEXYS). The original Ku Klux Klan was the military arm of The Knights of the Golden Circle. There were several dozen "front" organizations, but only a few received any publicity.

Some of the craftiest, finest brains in the South directed activities of The Knights of the Golden Circle. The group was heavy on ritual, which was borrowed from the Masonic Lodge and later The Knights of Pythias. A couple were members of the Rosicrucians.

The 13-man Inner Sanctum which ran the Golden Circle in the years immediately following the Civil War elected Colonel Elbert DeWitt Travis, alias William Clarke Quantrill and Charley Hart, as its chief. He served until his death in the middle 1890s. Secretary of the Inner Sanctum was "Uncle George" Payne, while Jesse James was elected treasurer and comptroller in 1867 when former Emperor Maximilian donated \$12.5 million to the group. The other ten members were General Nathan B. Forrest, John Patter-son (Jefferson Davis), Bud Dalton, Professor B. E. Bedeczek, Lewis Dalton, George Baxter, Captain John James, Coleman Younger, General J. O. Shelby and Jack (Brae) Miller. As members of the Inner Sanctum died or became too old to serve, they were replaced up to 1916.

On April 18, 1973, I held a secret meeting in Southern California with a handful of the "old Confederates." They explained they varied in age from 67 to 91 and had no desire for notoriety or even publicity, but they verified the thirteen members of the Golden Circle's Inner Sanctum "at one time after The War Between the States." The oldtimers I met with were all sons or grandsons of men who ranked high in the Golden Circle hierarchy.

One said, "We are dying out fast and our story should be told, but all of us have had bad experiences with reporters in the past. They generally got the story all botched up. Of course, we understand how that can happen because they were dealing with complicated stuff.

"The Golden Circle was like an early day Central Intelligence Agency, but the CIA was never as deadly, rich or powerful as the Circle. My Daddy told me that even during The

War Between the States at times the Confederate Army didn't always know what the Golden Circle was up to. Some years back, a woman wrote a book about the Golden Circle. Now what would a woman know? They were never allowed within two miles of a Knights of the Golden Circle meeting. And a member could be shot for whispering any Circle business to his wife, girl friend or sister. There was an organization with real discipline!"

Old Jesse James was the head of the Circle when its executive body decided there wasn't going to be a Second Civil War and sealed the records in 1916. In October, 1947, Colonel James, alias Colonel Jesse Franklin Dalton, made his first public utterance about the Golden Circle: "All our leaders had taken a blood oath and everyone who took this oath was well-informed about what disloyalty, violation of the oath or disregard of orders would mean. If any man ever disclosed a single secret by talking or writing (without specific permission from headquarters) he could expect the first member who could reach that violator would kill him on the spot."

The U.S. Government never caught a single active member of the Golden Circle. Jesse said, "Once in awhile the Yankees would nab some man and then brag they'd captured a member of the so-called 'James Gang'. Let me tell you we were an organized and operating underground army, backed and directed by the Confederate Underground Government which was seated in Nashville, Tennessee, for nineteen years after the end of The War Between the States."

Colonel James admitted during its sixty-five years of existence the Golden Circle "manipulated a lot of politics, dodges, hoaxes, double talk and leaks." Because they knew so little about the Golden Circle, news reporters and Northern politicians made liberal use of their imaginations and they eagerly pounced upon each "leak", which was only a crumb.

As historians are prone to do, the Golden Circle was wrapped up in a neat little package with a sticker which read, "Do Not Open Until the End of Time!" Historians relate the Golden Circle "was founded in 1859 by an adventurer named George Bickley who had the idea of establishing American colonies in Latin America with an idea of taking over all of Central and South America." Bickley claimed a "membership of at least 100,000, with 48,000 in Indiana and 18,000 in California." Federal officials scoffed and termed Bickley a "crackpot."

In 1946, an oldtime Californian had a letter printed in the now defunct El Monte Press-Times newspaper: "I was only 6 in 1860 but that summer The Knights of the Golden Circle held a whopping big camp meeting in Thompson's Grove. About 20,000 people, including my father, were there for what I remember was a three-day affair. Buggies, wagons and horses were lined up for miles around the village which today is known as the City of El Monte, California (current population: about 70,000).

"Half a dozen pro-South Union officers came down from Ft. Tejon, California, to speak. My father told me these same officers and many others went over to the Confederacy even before Ft. Sumter was fired upon. Daddy always said many of our Monte Boys (vigilantes who kept order in nearby Los Angeles) were in the Golden Circle. I'd say that El Monte was, in 1860, about 90 per cent pro-South and 90 per cent Democrat. The Golden Circle must have done a good job because Lincoln carried California by less than a thousand votes in 1860."

Fair, kindly Harris Newmark, the author of "Sixty Years in Southern California," wrote of the Monte Boys: "Another important function that engaged these worthy (El Monte) people was their part in the lynchings which were necessary in Los Angeles. As soon as they received the cue, the Monte Boys galloped into Los Angeles; and being by temperament and training, through frontier life, used to dealing with the rougher side of human nature, they were recognized disciplinarians."

A post-Civil War author wrote: "The Knights of the Golden Circle, a secret society, was organized in 1855 to advance the interests of the South. The original purpose was to form a government in the Gulf of Mexico area. Many lodges or 'castles' were maintained in the North as well as the South. In the 1860 presidential campaign they were a factor in defeating the Democratic Party because they supported the Southern wing instead of Stephen A. Douglas."

A pre-Civil War author wrote: "One hears about the Golden Circle Society, but no single member or any of their so-called 'castles' have been brought to light so we can only assume the whole thing is a myth which exists only in proslavery minds."

During the early days of the Civil War the Republicans became alarmed and charged that two Northern organizations, "The Sons of Liberty" and "The Order of American Knights" were "offshoots of the nefarious and reprehensible Knights of the Golden Circle which preaches States' Rights but wants to keep the Negro in bondage." Even Allan Pinkerton and Washington became alarmed and admitted, "The Golden Circle has made strong inroads in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois and these traitorous schemers bear watching."

The Sons of Liberty created tremendous mischief. They aided Union deserters, terrorized Union sympathizers and hindered the shipment of Yankee war material. They also fostered and abetted the anti-draft riots which shook large Northern cities, particularly New York City.

And then there were the peace-at-any-price Northern "Copperheads", who booed President Lincoln's speeches, charging "militarily it is impossible to conquer the Confederacy." On July 20, 1861, the now defunct New York Tribune "exposed" the Copperheads, whom they said took secret oaths and were quasi-military. Leaders of the Copperhead movement were Fernando Wood, of New York, and Alexander Long, of Cincinnati, Ohio, while Clement L. Vallandigham was the chief spokesman.

Old Colonel James admitted in 1949, "Well, the Copperheads, Sons of Liberty and Order of American Knights were all tied in with The Knights of the Golden Circle and they rendered a certain help to the Confederate cause. Trouble is, there weren't enough of them. And a lot of them were just misguided, negative nuts who would have rebelled against the Confederacy and aided the North if they had been living in the South. I never figured this type of person too reliable and I sure as hell wouldn't have wanted to have ridden into battle with any of 'em."

The Knights of the Golden Circle functioned quite openly from its Nashville headquarters during The War Between the States, helping to collect espionage data. But it was understaffed because the South's top men were busy on the battlefield. Many of the South's top officers - majors through generals - were considered for membership in the Golden Circle, but only the gung-ho ones were accepted.

Every war has had its snafus and the Confederates had one Golden Circle members laughed about for decades. In 1864, the gray uniforms of the South, which had been handmade were wearing thin and cloth was almost impossible to obtain. A Golden Circle agent in New York City, discharged two years earlier because of serious wounds, came up with a bright idea. Isaac Merrit Singer had invented a sewing machine in 1851 and every day the agent passed the place where they were displayed.

One day he withdrew organization funds from the bank and entered the store where he was greeted by a glib, confident salesman. "Good afternoon, sir, may I help you?" "I was jus' lookin' at the machines. Do you deliver 'em?" The salesman polished his fingernails on his lapels. "Mister, we'll deliver one to the South Pole if you pay the shipping charges." "Wal," the agent drawled, "I was thinkin' about buyin' twelve of 'em. Could you ship 'em to Nashville?" The salesman consulted a chart on the wall. "Sure thing, but they'll have to go by boat via New Orleans."

"There's a war on, mistah, and the Yankees don't allow no boats in or out."

Not about to lose the sale of twelve sewing machines, the salesman looked across the street and read the sign aloud: "Levi's Draying Service. We Go Anywhere."

A deal was struck with the Singer salesman and Levi, money was paid and the agent, smug in the knowledge that he was helping the South, was up next morning to watch two closed vans, each carrying six of the precious machines, depart for Nashville. A thorough agent, the man wrote a note in Confederate code and dispatched it to Nashville by special courier.

Northeast of Nashville, the Confederates and Yankees had just engaged in a brief, but bloody skirmish and the Union forces had withdrawn two miles to regroup. Late in the afternoon a Rebel patrol spotted two closed vans coming down the road. They halted the vans. A lieutenant and sergeant were summoned.

"Whar yo bound fer?" the sergeant asked, his pistol unholstered.

"We got top pree-orty items bound for Nashville," the first teamster replied.

"Yo sound mighty lak a damnyankee to me. Probably a goddam spy. We'all shoot both o' yo' rat now!"

"Search the wagons!" the lieutenant barked and twelve sewing machines were placed on the dusty road.

"Jus' whatinhell are they?" the sergeant asked, scratching his head.

"Sewing machines for making Confederate uniforms, I keep telling you," the teamster declared holding his hands about his head.

"Prob'lly in-fernal may-sheens," the sergeant said.

The teamster was a driver, not a sewing machine demonstrator, but his life was at stake so he asked for a chair and somehow got the machine to work to the satisfaction of the officer. His men helped reload the machines. "Shore do admire yo courage, mistah," the Lieutenant said, "but ifn yo' bound fo' Nashville, wal, might as well tell yo, a courier reports heavy skirmishin' goin' on 'tween here and thar. But good luck!" "Thanks a hell of a lot, mister!" the teamster replied, clucking to his horses. The two vans rolled off in a swirl of dust.

The sergeant shook his head. "What won' they think of next? Jus' imagine, a damn sewin' may-sheen!"

To the everlasting credit of Levi's Draying Service and the Singer Company, the two teamsters made it to Nashville, shaken but safe. Confederate soldiers counted at least twenty bullet holes in each van and the lead teamster had a bullet crease on his forehead, but the strange "sewing contraptions" came through unscathed.

Years later, Colonel Jesse chuckled, "Hell's fire, maybe we'd won the war if we'd employed Levi's Draying Service. Here people, including soldiers, were starving to death and this damn fool agent wastes our money buying sewing machines when we didn't even have any cloth to sew. Now, I'm not knocking Singer. I sold their machines for awhile in Tennessee after the war - until some Pinkerton tried to bushwhack me and I had to shoot him and leave town."

With Lee's surrender, The Knights of the Golden Circle membership increased rapidly, along with the subordinate organizations. The Circle moved into an old building on Fatherland in Nashville. The old building stood where "The Grand Old Opry" got its start.

Union troopers, led by Colonel Prichard, captured Confederate President Jefferson Davis

near Irwinville, Georgia, on May 10, 1865, and he was charged with treason. For awhile, it looked like the threat made in the old marching song, "We'll hang Jeff Davis from a sour apple tree," might come to pass. But Davis was placed in the Ft. Monroe, Virginia, guradhouse for two years without benefit of trial.

With President Lincoln dead only a month, Union Army and civilian prosecutors sought revenge on the hated symbol of Southern resistance. Davis was subjected to unspeakable indignities and tortures. Each morning, it seemed, a new prosecutor entered his cell with "a warranted way to make the rotten Rebel sonuvabitch talk." With the compassionate Lincoln dead and buried, sadistic federal officials had a field day.

They confronted the uncowered, but fallen Confederate leader, with "the known facts" that thousands of bales of Southern cotton, \$7 billion in gold and several hundred million dollars in silver had been "stashed away". Their questions always began, "Okay, Jeff, you tell us where," and ended with the threat, "If you don't, we're going to cut your goddamn balls off!" But Jeff Davis refused to talk. His nation had been beaten to its knees and things were chaotic during the final weeks of the Confederacy. At the time of his incarceration, he had no real knowledge where The Knights of the Golden Circle or his generals had cached the money or the cotton.

Davis said later that he probably would have been beaten to death by "the rabid young Union Turks" if saner heads hadn't prevailed in Washington and New York. Without Lincoln, the Washington bureaucrats were burning the midnight oil trying to figure out ways to bring order to the defeated South. In New York City and New England bankers and cotton processors brought pressure to get fallow and weed-choked Southern cotton lands producing again. For four long years they had been bidding against English mills for the world's meager supply of cotton and they were tired of it.

Released in one piece from Ft. Monroe in the summer of 1867, Jeff Davis was met at the gates by Knights of the Golden Circle and, after a feint toward Mississippi, a "double" was sent to the Deep South while Davis went to Nashville where he was pleased to find the Confederate Underground preparing to enter its third year of secret operations.

Golden Circle secretary George Payne greeted Davis warmly, but did not call him, "Mr. President," but simply, "Mr. Davis."

The fallen leader noted the slight and asked, "Why didn't you call me, Mr. President?"

Payne ushered Davis into an inner office and carefully closed the door. Then he answered, "Well, sir, you were appointed President for six years and your term was up last February 18. Of course, you being in Ft. Monroe, you probably didn't notice."

"Well," said Davis cheerfully, "if I'm no longer Mr. President, why don't you just call me 'Jeff.? After all, we've known each other for a few years, George." *

"Fine, fine. I'll call you Jeff."

"By the way, George, I've been a politician and a soldier all my life. When can I start campaigning for the presidency again?"

Secretary George Payne lit his pipe and looked at Jeff Davis through curling smoke.
"Well, Jeff, you just pointed out that you've been both a soldier and politician. I will add you were damn good in both fields, but with the Second War Between the States coming up, I think you'll be more good to the Confederate Underground Government as a soldier."

Davis couldn't smile, but he bravely faced the secretary and asked, "Meaning what, George?"

Payne got up and began pacing the floor. He stopped and put his hand on Davis' shoulder and said, "Jeff, you look tired. We have a room fixed up for you here."

Davis shook his head. "Yes, George, I'm tired. Bonetired. But I'd like to talk a bit. Somebody has to be running the show. You need a leader. By the way, who is the leader of the Confederate Underground, George?"

"We don't have just one leader. We have about half a dozen. The next War Between the States will be different. We'll be better prepared. We are already busily engaged in establishing gold and war material caches in the South, the North and the West. Why don't you take a nap, Jeff, and then we can talk some more."

Davis stirred in his chair. "Dammit, George, I asked a simple question and you give me an evasive answer. Who are the six men running the show. Is Robert E. Lee involved?"

Payne fixed his gaze on Davis' tired face. "No, not Lee. I can tell you that much. But I can tell you no more because, Jeff, you have not yet been accepted into the Inner Sanctum of the Golden Circle. It's as simple as that, sir. I hate to be so blunt."

"Perhaps," Davis argued, "you are forgetting that I worked hand and glove with The Knights of the Golden Circle during our four years of heroic fighting."

Payne reached over and helped Davis to his feet. "Look, sir, I am acting under instructions. We met you at the prison, we have secured a 'double' who is headed for your Mississippi home. My orders are to make you rest out the summer here."

Davis stared at him. "You mean I am your prisoner?"

Payne snorted. "Hell's fire, Mr. Davis, you know that isn't so. We want you to get rested up. Two doctors are waiting to see you right now. We'll need a healthy Jeff Davis and all your wisdom. We are counting on you to help us because we now have an infestation fresh from the North called the 'Carpetbagger.'"

"What in Heaven's name is a Carpetbagger, George?"

"Perhaps an 'Opportunist' would be a better name. While you were in Ft. Monroe, sir, we went through a seige of anarchy in the South. Not just rampaging freed slaves either. Renegades, both Yankee and Rebel, terrorizing the countryside and picking the very bones of the South clean like a flock of vultures."

"Who sent these Carpetbaggers, George?"

"Why, Washington - where all good things come from these days. They're down here to foment trouble, but officially the Union Secretary of War requested them in the Second Session of the 40th Congress, Mr. Davis."

"Requested? For what, George?"

"Officially, these Rebel-hating government employees are down here to take a head count of the freed people. They'll also list the deaf, dumb, blind, deformed, idiots and so on."

"I find it hard to fault that, Mr. Payne. If I were an adminstrator I'd want that kind of information."

"Don't be naive, sir! They're down here to foment trouble and discord, to get ignorant, uneducated Negroes to run for public office and the Union troops will scare off the white people from voting. It's revenge the Carpetbaggers are looking for."

Jefferson Davis suddenly yawned. "You know, George, I will take you up on that offer of a bedroom. I might be able to sleep for a week, if I try."

Davis followed the secretary up the stairs and down the hall where Payne opened the door. "It's all yours, sir, sleep tight."

"There's one thing, George. Did Colonel Quantril really die in the Union Army Hospital in Louisville?"

"That's what the Yankees put out, sir."

"Well, on the way out here from Virginia this week I heard mention of him still being alive, George."

"He is still alive, Mr. Davis. I saw him hale and hearty just last winter sometime."

The former President began taking off his frock coat. "Tell me one thing, George. Is Colonel Quantrill a member of the Inner Sanctum of The Knights of the Golden Circle?" "Ask me no questions, Mr. Davis, and I'll tell you no lies. Have a nice rest, sir."

Former President Davis had no way of knowing and secretary George Payne hadn't the

authority to tell him, but Colonel Quantrill, very much alive, and Colonel Jesse James were deep in Mexico, bringing out General J. O. Shelby's Missouri cavalrymen (and Maximilian's treasure).

As much as he liked adventure, Jesse had hated to leave ravaged Dixie. His wife, Myra Belle, and her father, Judge John Shirley, had accompanied him to Cyene, Texas, 14 miles east of where Dallas now stands, and they had established a home. They lived as Mr. and Mrs. Dick Reed, but when a horse thief with the same name had been hung, Myra Bell and he had hastily remarried as Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Younger. Poor Myra Belle fretted about not being able to have babies and she began to nag her young husband. Jesse began playing around with every pretty girl that came along; Myra Belle found out and divorced him. Jesse said half a century later, "Myra Belle Shirley or James or Reed or Younger was the only woman I ever loved."

After moving out and before the call came from Quantrill to report to Oak Grove, Louisiana, to map the rescue of Shelby's men, Quantrill had sworn him into The Knights of the Golden Circle, saying, "The day will come, Jesse, when you'll head the Golden Circle. The South shall rise again, son, and you will lead the way!"

While on a quick trip to Nashville, Jesse was elated to run across John Trammell, the ex-slave, who had fought beside Jesse's cousin, General Ike Porter, of Georgia, throughout the war. He also found his brother, Dr. Frank James, and learned that his father and mother had moved to Zanesville, Ohio, where Colonel George James was running a publishing house. The old plantation wouldn't be the same without them. Judge Shirley, Myra Belle and he had paid a short visit to Jesse's old home after leaving Carthage, Missouri. At Golden Circle headquarters he learned that Missouri Frank and Jesse James, his cousins, and Cole Younger were temporarily staying in Nashville.

During a reunion dinner, Jesse suggested, "Why don't we throw in together? The Organization (Golden Circle) says the South needs help. I just came from Texas and things are bad down there. You'll have plenty of chances to do some shooting, Cole."

Younger looked up and grinned, "What are we going to use for coins?"

"Okay, I'll tell you. I buried a small Union payroll of about \$35,000 in southeast Arkansas after we raided a supply train. We can dig that up. It'll keep us in chips for awhile," Jesse replied.

Missouri Jesse hesitated. "Are you sure it's alright with The Organization?"

Jesse stood up and laughed. "Look, we are The Organization, men. Come on, let's hit the Hoot Owl Trail for Arkansas!"

As an old man, Jesse recalled, "Freed slaves committed outrages against whites, and whites attacked freed slaves in many instances. It was a vicious circle. Some areas were comparatively quiet. But in other parts violence had taken over. Too many people, men

and women, were being shot down and nothing ever done or said about it. The attacks of burglars and raiders upon peaceful citizens had resulted in almost complete anarchy.

"Some had committed no other crime than being an ex-Confederate. They left with whatever they had on their backs, hired out as teamsters and headed West. Many starving, homeless whites were given food and clothing by the Indians, who were a kind, generous and understanding people. They, too, were underdogs, hardly knowing what tragedy awaited them the next day or the following week."

One night as they sat around a campfire in North Texas, Jesse spit out his chaw of tobacco and lit a cigar. "Damn it, I've never seen so many homeless kids. Don't know if their parents are dead or abandoned them and I doubt if the kids know either. When I was living with Myra Belle and the Judge down in Cyene, she was always picking up stray kids.

"There was this one, bright-eyed little boy. About 7 or 8, I reckon. Smart as a whip. He said his name was Ollie Roberts and he was really bedraggled. She got rid of his rags, got him a fairly new pair of pants and a clean shirt and said to him, 'Ollie, you need a new name. From now on, you shall be known as William H. Bonney. And just to confuse the Yankee soldiers, you tell them you're Billy Bonney and you're an orphan from New York City. You'll get kinder treatment by not admitting you're a Confederate.' Myra Belle was teaching him to read and write, but one day he disappeared into thin air. But don't worry, the world will hear of William H. Bonney some day. Hell, he might even head up the Golden Circle."

The men laughed and passed the jug of corn around again. Jesse refused to drink. Instead, his eyes had a mystic gleam as they watched the bright embers of the dying fire.

From travelers, Jesse and his group learned trouble was brewing in the Free State of Van Zandt, Texas, located about 40 miles east of where Dallas now stands. Thousands of former Confederate soldiers had congregated in Van Zandt. Even John Wilkes Booth, who had killed Lincoln, was hidden out in Canton.

So trouble was nothing new. In the first election after the Civil War, voters in Van Zandt County were forced to walk to the polls between two lines of Union Negro soldiers standing with fixed bayonets. Carpetbaggers weren't in the South making a survey in 1865, but "government men" from Washington had seized control of most levels of government in Texas and were despised by the Texans.

There is no evidence that the Union Negro troops mistreated any of the Van Zandt whites, but their very presence galled the former Rebel soldiers. So tricks were played. White residents would come to the Union Army camp and ask for "protection." Mysterious accidents happened to the Negro troops and many of the soldiers simply vanished. Carpetbaggers looked in vain for murderers.

One citizen named Wild Bill Longlee was an outspoken critic of the Carpetbaggers and

he never passed up an opportunity to roast them. The head "government man" and the white officer who commanded the Negro troops decided to make an example out of Longlee. Following a secret trial, Longlee was condemned to be hanged on the morrow. The sheriff was ordered to oversee the execution.

That afternoon, Jesse and his party rode into Canton from two directions. The sheriff, who had been Jesse's commanding officer while he underwent training early in the war in Tennessee, was heartsick. But orders were orders.

"What in hell can I do? Old Longlee ain't guilty of nothin' except that he doesn't know when to keep his mouth shet," he told Jesse.

"If Longlee isn't guilty, he shouldn't die. Let's go have a chat with a blacksmith we can trust," Jesse replied. The blacksmith turned out to be a former Confederate teamster who had served under Jesse in Louisiana and he was delighted to see Colonel James.

Jesse drew a diagram on paper. The smithy would fashion a steel ring which would encircle Longlee's chest up under his armpits. At the rear of the ring it would loop upward toward the back of Longlee's neck. The hangman's rope would be attached to this portion of the ring.

"Hell, Colonel, that's easy as fallin' off n a log," the blacksmith said.

"Wait, though, there's more. I want you to make him a couple of sort of steel stirrups that will fit under his feet inside his boots. The Sheriff 11 get some rope and cut it in lengths. Four, to be exact. He'll tie them from the ring around Longlee's chest down both sides of each pant leg to the stirrups below. I'm sure it'll work."

The sheriff scratched his head. "I sure as hell hope it works - if it doesn't the Union bastards will take over the job and hang me, too!"

"I understand Longlee is in your custody, right?" Jesse asked.

"Oh, shore, that's part of the damnyankee deviltry. 'Bout 4 a.m. the Union troopers, 'bout four of 'em, will come over to the jail to see ole Longlee don't light out."

"Okay, smithy, that means you have to work like hell. Longlee will have to sleep in this harness tonight," Jesse said.

"If you follow this plan, it'll work okay," Jesse reassured his former comrades-in-arms.

The next morning shortly after dawn, Jesse, accompanied by Cole Younger, John Trammell, and the two Missouri Jameses, joined the large crowd that had gathered near the gallows.

A fat Union major ignored catcalls and Rebel yells as he mounted the platform. Bringing

forth an official looking piece of paper he waved it for quiet.

At the rear of the circle a freckled-faced woman called out, "Yo murderin' bastid!" Then she gasped. Slowly, she turned around. A solemn-faced Negro trooper had scraped her shoulder blade with the tip -of his bayonet. "Yo rottin nigger bastid, git way frum me!" Then she spit in the soldier's black face. Jesse noticed he didn't move a muscle while the spittle slowly crept down his nose, past his mouth and onto his chin.

The white major ignored the incident and droned out the official execution sentence. Longlee had been tried and found guilty of six counts of murder involving a United States soldier, a federal crime, and would be hanged by the neck until dead.

Leaving the platform in a hurry, the major tripped over the parson who was ascending the short ladder to pray for the condemned. The major fell into a puddle of water - it had rained during the night - and the crowd roared with laughter and Rebel yells sounded.

The old minister waited a moment, trying to control a smile. Then he asked God to accept Longlee's soul "which was about to depart this earth." He closed with the plea: "Oh, God in Heaven, hear us, hear us; teach us to live together as your children."

After the preacher had gingerly climbed down the ladder, the sheriff mounted the platform and asked the condemned if he had any last words to say before the trap was sprung.

Longlee had plenty to say and the sheriff kept nervously looking at his watch. Jesse had never heard a more abusive, vituperative man. He nudged Cole and whispered, "I'm not a Yankee, but I can see why they'd want to hang this guy!"

The condemned chose his final words: "Ah go now, mah frens, but ah shall re-turn. Yes, ah shall re-turn. Ah shall re-turn and with Gawd's hep, ah will have mah re-venge on ev'ry damnable Yankee niggra sojer and ev'ry damnable Yankee carpetbagger who caused mah hangin'. Yes, ah shall re-turn. Lookey for me tomorra atop the ole Red Hill east o' town. And if n yo ain't thar tuh meet me, then ahm a-comin' into Canton and kill yo-all anyway. Ah shall re-turn!"

It was the cue for the sheriff to order the hangman to spring the trap. Longlee dropped through the door and his body hung there a moment or so. The Negro captain shouted an order and his troopers withdrew hurriedly from the hanging area.

The sheriff, who was also the county coroner, bent over, took Longlee's pulse and nodded his head. The hangman helped put Longlee's "body" into a pine box. For sound effects, Longlee's wife and sister-in-law began wailing loudly.

Before the sheriff could get the pine box lid on, Longlee protested, "Fer Chrissake, sheriff, git me outa this git-up -it'sa-killin'me!"

"Shut yo ungrateful mouth, yo miserable bastid - or we'll really hangyo!" the sheriff threatened.

A mule-drawn wagon took Longlee's "remains" out to the graveyard and stopped in front of a freshly-dug hole. With only the hangman, sheriff, Longlee's wife and sister-in-law present, the empty pine box was buried. The sheriff and the hangman took the iron ring, stirrups and ropes off and Longlee begged, "Throw them tor-churn things in the grave, too, sheriff!"

"Oh, no, we don't, yo selfish bastid - we may need 'em again," the sheriff replied.

"Not whin ah git through with Canton to-morra yo won' " Longlee promised as he headed down a back road to a cabin out of town.

Next day Longlee waited atop Old Red Hill east of Canton all day and naturally no Carpetbaggers nor Negro soldiers appeared. Longlee hadn't expected anyone to come so he spent the day catnapping. Late that afternoon, the sky turned red with a fiery sunset. Longlee was ready. He strode into town with two six guns at his sides.

With the red rays of the sun casting a strange hue on his face Longlee looked eerie and ghostly. A dozen soldiers lolling outside a saloon looked up and stared in horror. Longlee opened fire with both guns. He killed four of the troopers and wounded four others, allowing four to escape unscathed to spread the word. "Ah've returned!" Longlee bellowed again as the soldiers fled.

Beside the campfire that night, Cole Younger said, "That's the most disorderly retreat I ever seen an army make. Too bad ole Quantrill didn't think of that - we coulda won the Middle Border war!"

"Well," said Jesse rolling into his blanket, "it wouldn't have worked. You didn't have a fellow with a big mouth like that Longlee."

Next morning when Jesse's party rode out of town, people were gathered on the boardwalks discussing the hasty departure of the damnyankee army. A month later when they revisited Canton, they found the townspeople had appropriated the abandoned army tents and made them into raincoats and windowscreens. The Southerners may have been an impoverished people, but they were practical.

As they moved through the chaotic South, Jesse found big John Trammell a tremendous help in "quieting down Negro hot spots." When the giant Negro talked, the blacks listened. When he asked them to stop killing whites and each other, the blacks heard him out. At times he would "choose off the leader of a Negro band bent on murder and Trammell's fists would reduce the man to a bloody, sniveling shell in seconds.

The four James cousins, Cole Younger and Trammell often discussed the Negro's emerging role in the new South which was rising from the ashes of war.

Kentucky Dr. Frank James (his Missouri namesake was a doctor, too) volunteered, "Take John Trammell here. He's a hell of a man. I saw him fight that New Orleans champ when he belonged to cousin Ike Porter before the war. The New South needs men like John. Hey, John, I like your new name better than Sam Skates. But there's one thing, you should learn to read and write."

Trammell hung his head, "Jus' too busy, Mistah Frank, fo' buck-larnin'."

Frank laughed. "Yup, just too busy with your rifle and fists, and don't forget the wenches you pester, John!"

Missouri Frank kidded, "Lay off Trammell, cousin, a man that won't wench, won't fight."

Younger added, "Well, if that's true, then John Trammell must be one hell of a fighter!"

Jesse cleared his throat as he finished his dinner of sowbelly and beans. He raised his fork and spoke, "I know everybody here, including John Trammell, remembers my personal slave Calico. Maybe some of you don't recall that my father had Calico pegged as 'a runaway darkie.' Father sold him one time for \$7,500 and I raised so much Cain he bought him back for \$10,000.

"When I went to war at barely 17, Calico insisted on going with me. Dad was already with the CSA in Carolina and Mother gave her permission. Twice Calico carried me from the battlefield more dead than alive. He nursed me back to health. Then came the time when I was cornered and under heavy fire. Calico stepped in front of me and took the bullet meant for me. While he died in my arms I bathed his kind old face in my own tears. I gave him his last drink of water from the spring where he crossed his last mountain. Calico gave his life for me. He was more than a slave. He was my friend, my protector and my savior from that Yankee bullet."

The men noticed the tears in Jesse's eyes and were quiet.

Jesse lit a cigar and continued, "So Calico, a supreme human being, won't figure in the New South, but the memory of him serves a purpose. I know everybody here has heard of Mother Rebecca, but perhaps some of you never met her. Now here's an old Negro lady who is already aiding the Golden Circle to help restore order to the South.

"Many years before I was born, my grandparents purchased the blackest Negro woman they'd ever seen offered on the New Orleans auction block. She was fresh from Africa and plumb wild, but my father, who could speak many Negro languages, soon learned Rebecca was the daughter of a powerful African tribal medicine man. He taught her English in a matter of months. Father encouraged her witchcraft and she could cure many human ailments with herbs and roots, like the Indians did. Rebecca became an excellent midwife.

"She could go into a trance and predict events. She had marvelous second sight even without a trance. She correctly predicted the big earthquake which made Reelfoot Lake. She predicted the bloody War Between the States and the defeat of the South. She could read minds and when I was about 10 she told me I was psychic.

"Five years before the Civil War, grandpa gave Mother Rebecca her freedom, a bill of sale for her own husband, a home and a piece of land. She could tell fortunes and could cast spells. The Negroes called her a 'two-head', which meant she was a voodoo doctor. She could run you off or bring you luck. Today, there's no Negro in America who isn't frightened of Mother Rebecca's power.

"The Golden Circle is using this grand old Negress to bring order out of chaos. She is helping bring both white and black renegades to justice and more than one obnoxious Carpetbagger has dropped dead from a spell cast by Mother Rebecca. There was this Negro preacher in Georgia -I forget his name - who secretly headed a murderous robber gang.

"The Yankees protected the preacher, but killing got so bad, the sheriff asked the Golden Circle to bring in Mother Rebecca. She called the preacher in and he was shaking like a leaf. He admitted his crimes but claimed he was a Robin Hood, robbing the rich and giving to the poor.

"Mother Rebecca looked him in the eye and said, 'You lie, Reverend, because your gang is killin' both rich and poor and black and white. You are usin' the money to support a string of lady friends.' The preacher scoffed, saying, 'I don' need no voodoo two-head tellin' lies 'bout me.' Mother Rebecca replied, 'You will get on your horse and ride less than 500 feet and you will fall off your horse dead. And before the sun sets tomorrow every member of your gang will be caught and hangin' from a tree, Reverend.' Well, everything happened just like Mother Rebecca said. I hope God gives her a few more years because she can do great good."

Meanwhile, The Knights of the Golden Circle found a place for ex-President Jefferson Davis, but as a military officer, not as a politician. Davis did participate in me Underground Congress in Nashville, while his double puttered around the Davis family home, Beauvoir near Biloxi, Mississippi. The double became an expert on Confederate history, even granting a few interviews to Northern writers who never failed to comment on Jeff Davis' "humility."

Canton, Van Zandt County, Texas, became an increasingly important Confederate Underground center. All its law enforcement officials, plus local Texas Rnagers, were former Confederate soldiers who kept an eye peeled for damnyankee intruders. Jeff Davis changed his name to John Patterson and moved to Canton. He was able to locate \$1 billion in Confederate gold reserves and this was buried in huge steel safes as part of the Confederate cache system.

Before he died, Colonel Jesse admitted, "The Patterson Cache is still there, but it can only

be retrieved when the water table is at its lowest ebb. There are no easy or cheap treasures in the long list of Confederate depositories -they are all big and hard to get to. We planned it that way."

In later years, Jeff Davis, alias John Patterson, and Jesse James, using one of 72 aliases, founded several banks, including the First National Bank in Colorado Springs, Colorado. How much was Patterson's personal fortune and how much was Golden Circle money, old Jesse always refused to say. He'd change the subject, saying, "We got that \$1 billion into Van Zandt County by hiding the gold in hollow logs and it was hauled in big ox-drawn drays - right under the eyes of the damnyankees!"

Concerning the KKK, Jesse admitted, "It was the secret military police of the Old South, but the Golden Circle really rode herd on their activities. We began folding up the KKK a few years after the Golden Circle sealed its records for fifty years in 1916. We oldtimers had absolutely nothing to do with the modern KKK, which is a different breed of cat.

"Not many people in either the North or South knew that right after the end of the Civil War we recruited twenty thousand Negro KKK members. They were the most intelligent and reliable blacks we could find. Our theory was that Negroes would take orders easier from other Negroes. They weren't burning crosses or flogging, they were giving counsel and even financial help to the freed, but bewildered slaves. They kept busy knocking stupid ideas out of Negro heads put there by unscrupulous Carpetbaggers."

Only a handful of Golden Circle records remain today. In the first place, not much was written down. It was committed to memory. Jesse James III, who was raised at his grandfather's knee from the age of 10, probably is the greatest living authority on the Golden Circle and he is close-mouthed. "Many secrets, which I learned from Grandpa, will die with me. Why muddy waters? Many fine Southern families today have ancestors who did violent and expedient things while serving the Golden Circle. I'll let sleeping dogs lie.

"I'm often asked if I know of any Golden Circle secret records. I reply I certainly do. They are in my head and there are Confederate signs, often confused for Indian markings, on rocks throughout the West, South and Midwest. At today's prices, the buried Confederate treasure would probably be worth at least \$100 billion dollars, which isn't much money when you look over our Federal budget.

"And then there's the matter of ownership. Grandpa's underground army stole \$30 million from financier Jay Gould. If found, who would it belong to? Grandpa, who was worth \$5 million when he was only 22, had great personal wealth and he buried a lot of his precious metal. Can you imagine the battle his heirs would have over this dug-up treasure?

"Sometime during the 1960s, a great-grandson of one of Old Jesse's underground troopers and some of his companions located a Confederate cache of several hundred thousand dollars buried in milk cans in an old flour mill wall near Troy, Ohio. The kids blabbed

too much. They should have hired a smart lawyer with political connections and negotiated first with the Federal government, but they didn't. They just started digging. When they got it dug up, the Feds were there to confiscate the last double-eagle. It's still tied up in the courts and it's my opinion those kids will never get dime one - such is the exuberance of youth."

In addition to billions of dollars in buried Confederate Underground gold and silver, there are scores of caches containing arms, ammunition, sabers and varying amounts of gold and silver coins scattered throughout the West, including Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, Montana, California, Wyoming and South Dakota. At least three caches have been opened and emptied in the past 25 years near St. Joseph, Missouri; Guthrie, Oklahoma and Dallas, Texas. The contents were eagerly bought up by collectors.

The old Confederate Underground agents employed both engineers and geologists and used only dry caves with natural "air conditioning" and the cached booty was securely wrapped to keep it from rusting or corroding. Most of the rifles are in their original maple wood cases and cosmoline.

Jesse James III says he has personally visited and inspected caches in Montana, California, Wyoming and South Dakots in the past 10 years. "I've been at the big ones. One cave in Wyoming contains at least a thousand 1873 Winchester 44-40 repeating rifles and almost 100,000 gallons of century-old liquor." It is easy to believe that old Jesse, a notorious gun-runner, would have no qualms about rum-running.

His grandson said, "The South Dakota cache is a large one. I've walked right up to it twice. It contains 400 Winchester 44-40 repeating rifles, 250 Colt and Remington .45 calibre pistols and about 50 Colt 44-40 calibre pistols all in perfect working order. In addition, there are a couple of dozen Spencer and Winchester rifles of 45-90 and 45-70 calibre and two .45 calibre Gatling guns. There are a number of old saddles, blankets, ammunition and gold and silver coins with a face value of \$100,000."

If Jesse III knows where the booty is hidden, why doesn't he rent some mules or four-wheel-drive vehicles, go up and loot the caches? He replied, "I'm sure some of them have been discovered by accident and looted on the sly. But a wholesale recovery would have to be done legally, which is the way I've always operated.

"You'd have to fight your way through a maze of federal and state government red tape. The barrels of the Gatling 'machine guns' would have to be rendered inoperable, of course. And the liquor presents a problem. Would the cave constitute a warehouse? Would you have to operate under a distiller's license in bringing it forth? What about the U.S. Treasury Department and local state agencies governing liquor control? Would some U.S. Judge order it seized on some pretext or other? I certainly know the value of century-old scotch, bourbon, brandy, rye, etc. -I guess you could assume it was 'properly aged'.

"If I suddenly dumped a thousand century-old rifles and pistols on the market, what

would happen to their value? I might get \$5,000 apiece for the first dozen, but only \$2 for the rest. The DeBeers Principle for controlling the value of diamonds might apply to these old rifle and pistols. Collectors pay big prices for items because they are rare. If the market was flooded with old guns the price would drop to nothing, wouldn't it?"

Some of the old Confederate caches have hundreds of cans of canned food. Jesse III says, "About 10 years ago we opened a food cache on the Hoop Up Trail near Ft. Benton, Montana, and found beans and pork cans by Heinz, early Borden condensed milk cans and canned beef. We opened some of the cans and ate a hearty meal with no bad after effects. Some of the stuff was 75 or 80 years old."

The tentacles of the Golden Circle went everywhere. Old Jesse said that 90 per cent of the raids, robberies or hijacks carried out by the Confederate Underground for almost fifty years after the end of the Civil War were the result of "inside information". Old Jesse, a far-away look in his blue eyes, said, "We old Rebels had quite a network. We were particularly effective in the South, the West, Canada, England, the Orient, South and Central America. Some incredible things happened and you would be surprised at some of the biggest international names in history worked closely with us. Every man has his price. Remember that. It's true, too.

"I've been rightfully accused of being a gun-runner. I ran guns to Crazyhorse, Sitting Bull and other Plains Indian leaders. And I ran guns to the oppressed Cuban people, long before Washington woke up when the U.S. Battleship Maine was blown up. The Cubans helped the Confederacy a great deal and their Spanish rulers were a bunch of sadists, so we helped them. We even sent military experts to instruct Cuban guerrillas. And I ran guns to General Pancho Villa and supplied him with lots of money. But everything I did had the complete sanction of the Inner Sanctum of The Knights of the Golden Circle."

Several of old Jesse's descendants learned some of the old warrior's secrets, but only Jesse James III learned all the facts. He says, "I once read a book written by a woman concerning the Golden Circle. It was an iron-clad rule that no woman, even close kin, ever learned certain facts. There was a matter of the blood oath, backed by execution if broken. John Wilkes Booth never got close to The Knights of the Golden Circle - there were too many passwords, the constantly changed handshake and the signs and symbols.

"In later years, the Golden Circle was run by thirteen of the best and wealthiest men in the South. The Master sat on the Throne of the East and gave out his wisdom and directions to twelve so-called Disciples, who in turn each had twelve disciples. The only way one could get into the Inner Sanctum or Inner Circle was when one of the Master's Twelve died off or retired. There's a lot more involved in the Golden Circle, but that's all I'll reveal. As far as I'm concerned, the rest belongs to the ages!"

Colonel Jesse Woodson James was an unreconstructed Confederate until his last breath on August 15, 1951, but his idealism was strongly tempered with realism. No man could have gone through his bitter experiences in the War Between the States or his sixty-six years of hiding or running one of the world's greatest secret organizations for decades

without being affected.

His relatives report that in Jesse's twilight years he knew the South was changing and would even change more. It was with pride that he predicted the day was fast approaching when the South would be the most important section of the United States. Jesse James III recalls, "The old man read with pride the exploits of Southern soldiers in every American war, but he was a patriotic American. He used to say, 'We got the best system the Lord ever let be devised. We just have to do our part to keep it that way.' He loved the song, 'Dixie', and was not above giving a Rebel yell when spotting the Confederate Stars and Bars, but when the American Flag went by and the band played 'The Star Spangled Banner,' old Jesse stood ramrod, soldier straight. 'That's my Flag, too,' the old man would whisper."



Kentucky Frank James is buried in Oklahoma grave.

Bob Dalton, first cousin of Jesse James, was dead shot.

Chapter 13

No Halos for Old West Badmen

The history of the South has never been published; The history of the West had never been told.

The author of this statement was old Jesse Woodson James who led newsmen on a merry chase at Lawton and Guthrie, Oklahoma, in 1948. He told some real whoppers to protect old friends still alive. As a veteran reporter, I feel sorry for the newsmen who were taken in by Jesse's devious tales.

It took the old outlaw three years to die and thinking every day might be his last, he began leveling with his closest relatives, particularly his grandson, Jesse James III. "As a former detective," Jesse III said, "I took off the kid gloves and zeroed in on the old man. I kept at it until I got straight answers and I wrote them down."

And old Jesse could do a little documentation on his own. He had often complained that he never should have been outlawed for guerrilla activity during the final two years of the Civil War. He produced a time-worn book by G. W. Cable, "Famous Adventures of the Civil War," and turned to a chapter written by A. E. Richards. I am in possession of this book and a paragraph in Richards' chapter reads:

"During the early stages of The War Between the States, the Confederate Congress enacted a statute known as the Partisan Ranger Act, which provided for independent bodies of cavalry to be organized as other government troops. The officers were to be regularly commissioned and the men to be paid like soldiers. The distinctive features were that the rangers should operate independently of the regular army and be entitled to the legitimate spoils captured from the enemy."

Although cataracts were robbing him of his eyesight, old wounds were breaking open and ulcerating and he was rendered immobile by a twice-broken hip, old Jesse's mind was crystal clear until he breathed his last. If Jesse III doubted some of his grandfather's "death bed confessions," old Jesse came up with names and addresses of oldtimers long thought dead. After he buried his grandfather, Jesse III spent twelve years looking up the oldsters. He sought and in most cases received corroboration of old Jesse's intimate versions.

In general, the old man scoffed at historians who quoted oldtimers who "told the real truth." He'd snort, "Those are damn lies. I know; I was there. Many oldtimers are psychopathic liars or lying with the purpose of white-washing a badman ancestor - remember, none of the Old West badmen wore halos. Sometimes, oldtimers were trying to gain a moment of fleeting fame for themselves. Other times, they took money and allowed a Hollywood screenwriter to put words in their mouths for a movie with a new twist. Sometimes it was an author who paid them. Like a boxer, the author's arms were

weary and somehow his fingers just couldn't type a new angle. And then there are these purposeful public relations bastards who knock out fiction to improve the image of their railroads, tourist attractions, or what have you."

One of old Jesse's final confessions involved the true identity of The Hanging Judge, Isaac Charles Parker, the Federal Judge in Ft. Smith, Arkansas, who won fame for his mass hangings.

Old Jesse said, "Historians have written reams about Judge Parker, the good Republican who won a Federal Judgeship from President U.S. Grant, another Republican. With his notoriety, you'd think newspapermen or that great detective, Allan Pinkerton, would have delved deeper into Judge Parker's background.

"If they had, they would have discovered that Judge Parker was really John Younger. That's right, his brother was 'deadly' Cole Younger. About in 1874, John Younger was reported killed in some shooting scrape in Monagaw Springs, Missouri, but John wasn't even there. People swore it was John Younger and that's the way it went into the history books.

"Legally dead, John changed his name to Parker, got religion and went up to Ohio and became a Republican. Despite his pious courtroom appearance and Bible-pounding antics, the Judge remained a crook at heart. I can give you a list of a dozen oldtime bandits who saved their necks by paying tribute to Judge Parker.

"My mother was a Dalton, an aunt of the Dalton Gang brothers and Cole and John Younger's mother was a Dalton, so I guess you'd say Judge Parker and I were kinfolk. After I pulled the St. Joseph hoax and before I was legally dead in 1889, Cole Younger and I often visited Judge Parker in Ft. Smith.

"One night, we were sitting in the Judge's living room and Parker asked, 'Jesse, do you have to wear your six-guns while you're a guest in my home?' I replied, 'You're damn right I do, Judge, just in case you forget you're John Younger and try to put a rope around my neck!' Parker knew I was a wealthy man, and he suspected my connections with the Confederate Underground. He was always trying to pump me. One night, I told him, 'Judge, you sold out to the damnyankees for a judgeship. We're now on opposite sides of the fence and I reckon we'll stay that way!'

"When we were around Judge Parker, Cole and I were damn careful. Some nights, I guess his conscience was bothering him - he'd pace the hall for an hour or so. Cole and I'd sit up in bed, a six-gun in each hand. We never trusted him. There's something about a man who suddenly gets religion and changes his political party. He's like a reformed drunk. My brother, Dr. Frank, was a brilliant man, but he was a terrible lush. Then he swore off Demon Rum and became a fanatical Prohibitionist. I've seen him knock a glass of whisky out of a friend's hand. And I've seen him suddenly pull out his guns and start shooting up a bar just because they peddled drink."

I have in my possession an old photograph taken in Dodge City, Kansas, date unknown. In the back row, standing, from left to right are Myra Belle Shirley (Jesse James' first wife), lawman Luke Short and lawman Bat Masterson. Seated in the front row, from left to right, are Jesse W. James, Billy the Kid (then 20) and Marshal Wyatt Earp. Somewhat strange bedfellows, wouldn't you say?

A short time after the photo was taken, even a stranger thing happened in Dodge City. Members of the James Organization were having a snort in a saloon when they overheard an Army major tell the bartender he was killing time waiting for a special Army payroll due in an hour by stagecoach.

Jesse shoved two \$20 gold pieces across to one of his men. "Sidle up to that major and get him drunk as you can get him in the next hour," the Colonel ordered.

"It was just a spur of the moment thing and like damn fools we just sat there drinking - slowly, but still drinking. In the meantime, the damnyankee major fell on the floor, dead drunk. The barkeep stuffed him in the backroom where he could sleep it off," the old man said.

Half-drunk, Jesse and his men were waiting for the stage when it pulled up. Jesse said to the driver, "You're five minutes late - never keep the Army waiting. We'll take it now." Not a shot was fired during the daylight robbery and the men rode out of town with two small paychests.

Where were famous Marshal Wyatt Earp and his trusted lieutenants, Bat and Jim Masterson, Luke Short and Joe Mason? "There was only \$20,000 in the heist," Jesse said, "and we buried it. We came back into town next day and stayed for three days. Nobody ever questioned us."

Was Jesse trying to tell his relatives something? He was evasive, saying, "Wyatt Earp was just a gun-slinger and a whorehouse owner, but so were a thousand others in the Old West. It would be hard to imagine Wyatt wearing the wings of an angel, but for some reason I always felt like protecting Wyatt. Same way with Doc Holliday. My brother, Dr. Frank, treated Doc for TB at Glenwood Springs, Colorado, but he died anyway in the 1890s.

"Wyatt and Doc made quite a mess of things when Earp was marshal in Tombstone, Arizona. Wyatt owned the biggest cat house in town and he was getting a cut of this and a cut of that. There was never any shootout at the OK Corral - that's just hysterical fiction. The Clanton boys were shot down in cold blood on the street. Both Wyatt and Doc told me that.

"After Wyatt broke his pick in Tombstone, he drifted north to Colorado City, Colorado. We sat and talked one night for four hours and I told him I could use an 'undercover man' for my mines and freight-hauling business. I was losing stuff from time to time off my freight wagons and was trying to plug the leak.

"But Wyatt was a crooked bastard at heart. His second week on the job we suffered a big hijacking, something that had never happened before. I got suspicious and assigned an agent to Wyatt's tail. We ran a fake payroll down to my mine in New Mexico and I told Earp the trunk contained \$50,000. I told Wyatt, 'Your reputation should scare off any bad boys. You ride up with the driver. There'll just be the two of you.'

"My agent reported Wyatt had been seen talking to four tough-looking hombres so I decided to fix Earp's little red wagon. I was out there to see the stage off. At the last minute, I said, 'Wyatt, I got four packages to go to my mine manager. I'll have the boys just put them inside the stage. You got the trunk up there.' Earp was a wary cuss and said, "Why not just put 'em up here on top?" But my boys had already begun putting the four packages inside. In each package was a trusted gunman and each wore the old Confederate harness containing six pistols. The driver also wore a harness. I told him of my 'packages' and that I suspected Wyatt was going to pull another inside job."

Five miles out of town Wyatt tried to get the driver to stop so he could "go in and see if the packages were all right." He refused pleading a tight schedule. "Yore shore suspicious, Mr. Earp," the driver said.

"Well, Colonel Hewitt pays me big money to be suspicious," the former marshal replied.

Four hours out of Colorado City, four armed horsemen blocked the road and ordered Earp to toss down his shotgun and the driver threw his Colt into the road.

"And now the trunk," the masked leader ordered.

With that, the driver ripped open his buckskin jacket, grabbed two pistols from his harness, and began firing. And the four men tore out of the paper packages, leaped from the stage interior and within ten seconds all four bandits lay dead in the dust.

Stupefied, Earp gasped, "Where'd the four men come from?"

"The Colonel thinks of everything," the driver said, turning the stage around.

"He shore does," Earp replied.

Back in Colorado City, Earp, still pale and shaken, was informed that Colonel Hewitt wanted to see him at once. Earp walked into the Colonel's office and sank into a chair. The Colonel blew a big smoke ring, studying his "undercover man." For two minutes there was silence.

Then Earp said, "I guess you know, Colonel."

"Yup, Wyatt, it takes a thief to catch a thief. I was hoping you'd fit into The Organization, Wyatt, because I could have used you. Here's an envelope with a thousand dollars in it,

which should give you a fresh start somewhere. Good luck to you."

Earp and Jesse crossed paths again out on the West Coast where Wyatt was running a chain of parlour houses. "He always put up a good front with me," Jesse said, "but I knew that his backer was a financial genius who was on a first name basis with a lot of U.S. Presidents."

Historians were most unkind to the bloodthirsty Dalton Gang - they not only falsely killed some of them off once, but twice. Emmett Dalton, who went to prison for staging the double bank raid in Coffeyville, Kansas, on October 5, 1892, ended up in Hollywood where he became a celebrity. Like all the Daltons, Emmett had a speech impediment. To keep "dems" and "dose" from slipping out he carried pebbles around in his mouth. Before he died on July 13, 1937, Dalton wrote a book, "When the Daltons Rode."

Old Jesse said, "I've read what is purported to be Em Dalton's book, but some imaginative screenwriter just put a lot of words in Em's mouth. When they buried old Em, the press billed him as 'the very last of the Dalton family.' Well, I had to hand it to Em for not giving away any family secrets. The Daltons, Jameses and the Youngers all knew how to keep their mouths shut."

Indeed they did. Jesse James III chides the historians. "They missed a mile when they wrote off Emmett Dalton as the very last of the family. Actually, six family members were alive and three of the 'dead' brothers attended cousin Em's last rites in 1937, right under the noses of newsmen, historians and Hollywood celebrities. The list:

GRAT (TORNADO) DALTON, "killed" the first time at Coffeyville in 1892 and "killed" again as the Sundance Kid or Enrique Brown near La Paz, Bolivia, in 1909. Actually, Grat died under the name of Grover Shropshire outside Cut Bank, Montana, in 1965. He was about 100 years old.

BOB (HURRICANE) DALTON, "killed" at Coffeyville in 1892, was living in northeast Oklahoma as Bob McWhorter in 1948, not more than a hundred miles as the crow flies from Coffeyville.

WES DALTON owned a cattle ranch in 1948 in the Llano Uplift Country of Texas.

HENRY DALTON died in Farmersville, California, in 1966.

SY (CYCLONE) DALTON was alive in 1948, living with his daughter in Dallas, Texas.

LEONA DALTON, an old maid sister of the Dalton brothers, died in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, in 1966. Leona had a cleft palate and hairlip and was almost impossible to understand. Leona was one of four Dalton sisters.

A former Negro jockey, Eugene Robertson, who cooked and served as a runner for the Dalton Gang, was living in Logan County, Oklahoma, on July 27, 1948, and knew that

neither Grat nor Bob Dalton had been killed in the Coffeyville raid. "Unless dey die since Christmas time, dey still alive," he said, insinuating he kept in touch with the Dalton survivors.

Historians will be quick to point out that Harry Longbaugh was the Sundance Kid. He certainly was. Another alias was Ben Kilpatrick. Toss in Grover Shropshire, Enrique Brown and half a dozen more assumed names. How did Grat Dalton get the name, the Sundance Kid? He holed up one winter in Sundance, Wyoming, and the name stuck. One alias was as good as another.

"But they all add up to Grat Dalton. This will come as a shock to many Western buffs used to seeing that worn old photo taken in 1892 at Coffeyville showing Bill Powers, Bob Dalton, Grat Dalton and Dick Broadwell stacked like cordwood awaiting the undertaker. The men identified as Bob and Grat Dalton were corpses of the Christian brothers," Jesse III points out.

"Bob and Grat Dalton, Bill Doolin and Eugene Robertson were just about to enter Coffeyville from another direction when Doolin's horse threw a shoe. They stopped to nail it back on and this took about ten minutes. By that time the shooting had started. The tardy bandits were just in time to help a couple of men escape and then run for it themselves. I'd heard the story two dozen times from Grat Dalton," Jesse III said.

In 1958 the grandson of Jesse W. James was in Montana and not unsurprisingly found parts of what his grandfather had called The Organization still operating. He'd heard Grat was going under the alias of Grover Shropshire and living near Cut Bank.

"After practically ringing doorbells, I learned Grat was herding 3,000 sheep and was living out on the range. I finally spotted him. Not wanting to frighten the old man, I sent an Indian messenger to him with the word, 'Somebody from The Organization wants to see you.'

"Then I waited a day and showed up. Grat didn't run me off, but he was quite withdrawn. A few weeks before my arrival, some drunken bully had batted Grat across the chops right on a Cut Bank street. Grat hit him a couple of times and the drunk fell and broke his neck. Grat had witnesses and was exonerated. Aside from getting drunk once in awhile when he went to town, old Grat behaved himself. But he was 93 and as I said, quite withdrawn. It took the better part of six months to get him to open up.

How did Grat and Butch Cassidy escape the Bolivian soldiers in South America?

Grat replied, "Hell, that was a put-up job. Butch and I were using our Wild West Show as a front. We were robbing and raising hell. The show was pretty exciting - we should of stuck to that. Our performers included Billy the Kid, Will Rogers, Milt Hinkle and Tex Allsworth. Yes, that was Will Rogers, the actor and columnist. We billed Will as the Argentine Kid. He spun a mean rope.

"Cassidy and I had been raising so much hell that we figured it would be only a matter of time until we got ambushed so we bribed El Capitan of the Bolivian army. We gave him plenty of dinero and a script to follow. I would be shot in a patio and Butch would use his last bullet on himself. El Capitan took care of everything - he was damn glad to see the last of us - and the story was blown up back in the States." Jesse III said, "I told Grat that I knew Butch Cassidy was alive in 1910 because he rescued me from five kidnapers in the St. Louis railroad station."

Dalton interrupted his guest. "I've heard the story, but let me tell it, just so you'll know I'm not senile. Let's see, your mother had died when you were born and you were living with Jesse's twin sister, Aunt Tilly, who was married to Obediah Howk. Right? Let's see now. Oh, some crooked marshal, forget his name, down in Oklahoma knew old Jesse James had money. He put up three men and two women to snatch you. Damned if I can remember the rest of it."

Jesse III cut in. "They wired Grandpa a ransom note, demanding \$10,000, knowing full well old Jesse couldn't or wouldn't go to the law. A phony name was signed and a third-rate hotel address was listed. Grandpa wired back, "Your bill received and will be paid. Please await my contact." Then he fired off a telegram to Butch Cassidy, who was in a St. Louis hospital for a checkup. Butch had worked for old Jesse long enough to know he often wrote in code. He gave Butch all the information he had and closed with 'Get them!"

"I was only 5, but I remember them keeping me tied up. At night when they thought I was asleep, the kidnapers talked openly. Apparently they were carrying on quite an exchange of telegrams with Grandpa. Butch had the hotel staked out, but nobody ever called to pick up old Jesse's wires. Apparently some bellhop was acting as a runner. Two weeks went by and I later found out Butch was moving heaven and hell. He and four men checked over every kid leaving the station.

"Finally one morning the two women and three men took me to the railroad station. We were immediately accosted by five men. Their leader, whom I later learned was Butch Cassidy, said, 'I'm the Colonel's contact.' A man called George said, 'Oh, that's nice. Do you have the money?' Cassidy replied, 'Yes, I have something for you. Let's all go outside.' George said, 'That sounds reasonable.'

"Once in back of the depot and away from people, Butch and his gunslingers shot and killed both women and two of the men. The survivor was shot in the foot and Butch made him talk. The kidnaper said they were taking me to Cuba; he named the Oklahoma marshal behind the scheme and then pleaded for his life. But Butch shot him between the eyes."

Old Grat Dalton said, "I remember the next morning in that Oklahoma town the marshal's wife went in to see why he was oversleeping. When she pulled the sheet off his face, she discovered he'd been shot. In those days, The Organization acted fast.*"

A few nights later, Jesse III asked cousin Grat, "I want you to tell me the real truth. Did you and Butch Cassidy help old Jesse pull 'one last train holdup' over in Arizona in about 1905?"

Grat grinned. "Well, seeing your Grandpappy has climbed his last mountain, I see no harm in 'fessing up. Yes, we did, but the so-called holdup was staged near Lordsburg, New Mexico. We dragged the \$44,000 over to Ft. Thomas, Arizona, and buried it." The old bandit warmed up. "Butch and I fell in the dust that day laughing. Your Grandpa had really set us up for that one. Or, I should say, set up the railroad and the insurance company."

Jesse III cut in, "Well, Grat, I heard the story. It was one of Grandpa's death-bed confessions. But I want to see if his version jibes with yours. Go on, please."

Grat's eyes took on a new lustre. "Old Jesse James was real foxy. It was his own money to begin with. He insured it in Chicago for what I believe was \$100,000. Then he bribed the engineer and the baggage coach boys. Let's see who was there. First, there was old Jesse, and Butch, Tim Capps and Ora Doiel, and me, of course. All five of us were sitting on our horses and when the train rounded the bend, the engineer stopped the baggage coach right in front of us.

"A darky opened the door and asked, 'Where do you want it, Colonel?' and Jesse said, 'Just roll it out. That'll be fine.' The two Negroes pushed it out and Jesse said, 'Nice doing business with you.' The engineer tooted twice and pulled out. The loss of the chest wasn't reported until the train hit Los Angeles. Of course, the insurance company paid off and apologized profusely."

Grat stared into the fireplace. "Yup, there'll never be another man like old Jesse Woodson James, God rest his soul. He did a lot more good than he did bad, but he was a real outlaw alright."

While he stoked the logs, Jesse III asked, "When did you last see Butch Cassidy?"

"Well, sir," Grat answered, "when a man gets older, you'd think he'd seek out his old buddies more. But that isn't always the case. Let's see, Butch and I last got together in the late 1930s over in Lander, Wyoming, where he died about six months later. Funny thing, Butch and I for years were thicker than thieves, which we were. But after we'd talked all night, there was nothing more to talk about. In a way,

I guess there's nothing more lonely than being an old outlaw."

Grat Dalton told Jesse that a few years after their escapades in South America, he and Butch Cassidy went to Hollywood and worked as movie extras. Cassidy even played some roles using the name "Tex Driskell." Grat reminisced about his old days in The Wild Bunch, the Hole in the Wall Gang and Butch Cassidy Gang. And he talked of Kid Curry, who died in Bannack, Montana, about 1942.

"Did you know I even fought in the Johnson County Cattle War up in Wyoming beside old Jesse? Millions of words have been written about Jesse James' magic with a pistol, but he was no slouch using a rifle. And think! My God, that man did his best thinking while he was under fire."

Many historians have been kind to the penny-ante outlaw Sam Bass, the happy-go-lucky Indiana orphan boy, who died of wounds on his 27th birthday. The illiterate outlaw organized a band of thugs and looted and robbed his way from the Black Hills south to Texas and Louisiana.

Young Bass had two obsessions. He wanted to get rich and he wanted to join Jesse James' "gang." While heavily disguised, Jesse talked to Sam Bass several times in frontier bars and he reported to his brother, Dr. Frank, "This Bass is just a bad-assed brat. He's a petty thief. There's a lot of illiterate people in the country, but this Sam Bass is just plain ignorant."

Dr. Frank chuckled over a glass of brandy. "Well, Jesse, did you get his application for The Knights of the Golden Circle? You said he wants to join our 'gang', didn't you?"

Jesse ignored his brother's ribbing. "I told this idiot that I was a friend of Frank and Jesse James and I'd get word to them. If they were interested, they'd get in touch with him."

Dr. Frank roared. "Well, I presume you'll wait until morning before sending for Sam Bass. The Golden Circle does nothing hasty, you should know that, Jesse."

Jesse said, "This Bass says, 'Whadda ya mean, Jesse and

Frank ain't got no gang? You think I'm stupid or something?'"

"I hope you used that opening and said 'yes', brother."

"Oh, shut up, Frank, I'm turning in."

Sam Bass' antics continued to irk Jesse and occasionally he heard that Sam when drunk had boasted about his "great friend, the one and only Jesse James." Jesse was so angry that he passed the word to his old Confederate friends now serving as Texas Rangers, "I'm devising some special form of extermination for Sam Bass if our trails should ever cross." Hank Magee quit Sam Bass and was accepted into Jesse's organization after a careful investigation.

In the spring of 1878 the Texas Rangers had a dragnet out for Sam Bass and his gang. One April day Sam Bass made camp west of what is now known as Glen Rose, Texas. Anxious for mischief, Sam and sixteen of his men rode into town and stopped at the general store.

After doing some shopping for food, Sam led the way to where a barrel of whisky stood. There were plenty of cups and the sign read, "Ten Cents a Drink." After several cups apiece of white lightning, Bass refused to pay the storekeeper standing in the doorway wringing his hands.

A quarter of a mile from the store a group of women were washing their clothes in the rocky creek. It was a peaceful scene. No Indians had been seen for several months and the women enjoyed gossiping as they pounded their clothes with flat rocks.

With a yell, Sam and this sixteen men galloped amid the women, each man leaning down out of his saddle and sweeping a girl or woman into his arms. One girl, with an infant in her arms, was seized by Bass himself. When the baby began to cry, Sam tore it from its mother's arms and tossed it to the road.

Upon reaching Sam's camp three miles from town, the men systematically raped the captured women. Then they discovered their cook had half a dozen bottles of liquor and this was consumed. The terrible party continued through the afternoon with several fights over the women. Sam broke up most of them but several injuries occurred. Little pain was noticed and it was a miracle no killing happened. The trigger-happy gang was completely unpredictable. By nightfall Sam and the sixteen culprits had passed out. Some of the women escaped and made it back to the village.

The men in town were poorly armed and probably no match for Bass' toughs even though they were dead drunk. The storekeeper had dispatched a Negro boy with a note to Jesse, who was believed to be camped on the road to Camp Worth.

When Jesse saw the note and found that Sam Bass was involved, he faced his men and said, "What do you think we should do? I can't think clearly when I think of Sam Bass. I despise the SOB so much!"

Bud Dalton spoke, "Well, Jesse, I can't speak for you, but myself, hell, if Sam Bass ain't stopped now he'll be worse than those renegades that ravaged the South after the War for Southern Independence. I say, let's go git him!"

Guided by a young Negro, Jesse and his men rode hard for Bass' camp and surrounded it in the darkness. In the dawn's dim light, Jesse and Dalton discovered the camp was empty, but Bass' trail was easy to follow. They met a rancher who said his two teen-age daughters and a visiting 14-year-old cousin had been kidnapped from his home by a "band of tough-talkin' bandits."

Some miles down the trail, Jesse found Sam Bass' new camp and his men appeared to be sleeping late. He ordered his men to surround the tents, their rifles at the ready.

Then Jesse roared, "Sam, this is Jesse James, come out of your tent, I want to meet you."

Wearing a silly smile, Sam Bass ducked out from his tent.

"Well," he said, pleasantly, "we finally meet. Tell your boys to lower their rifles. We two gang leaders have some talking to do."

Jesse got off his horse and Bass walked up to shake his hand. Instead, Jesse whipped out his gun and pistol-whipped Bass to the ground. When he tried to get up, Jesse kicked him and sent him sprawling.

Bass stared dumbly, but unafraid, as a deep hole was dug. Sam was placed in it up to his neck. Jesse ordered the dirt tamped tightly around Sam's body. Then Bud Dalton poured wild honey over Sam's bloody head and face. The honey was rubbed in his hair, ears and up his nose.

"You raping, murdering bastard, Sam Bass," Jesse said, "when those big red ants start eating you I hope you suffer tortures of hell!"

Jesse reasoned that the red ants would have Sam eaten alive in the matter of hours. Meanwhile, his men had disarmed Bass' vaunted gang without firing a shot.

But he had figured wrong. A half hour after they had departed for the six-mile ride to Glen Rose, a farmer came by and hearing Sam Bass' screams, dug him out. Once out of the hole, Sam scraped the ants from his face and began running toward Dennison, Texas.

Upon reaching the store, every rapist was identified by the women. Three of Bass' men, two Negroes and a white man named Frank Jackson claimed they had no part in either the raiding or kidnapping and the women confirmed this.

Jesse turned to Bud Dalton, "Give these men their horses and guns back. They are blameless and therefore may go free, but the rest must stand trial."

A jury of seven farmers, cowboys and businessmen was hastily chosen and each of Sam's thugs was given an opportunity to answer his accuser. Later Jesse said, "The women showed a lot of guts standing up there and testifying they'd been raped by those thugs."

Every one was found guilty. They were marched out of the village and forced to dig their own common grave. First their accumulation of loot was tossed into the bottom of the hole, next went their saddles and after they were shot, their bodies thrown on top. Then Negro servants filled the grave with dirt. Jesse turned the dead outlaws' horses and pack animals free to roam.

Apparently Jackson and the two Negroes caught up with Bass, but the Rangers were closing in. Bass was wounded, but lived three days to die on his 27th birthday.

Since I learned to read in the first grade, I've had a long and abiding interest in history,

particularly of the Old West. This was enhanced by one-armed Professor Louis Pelzer at the University of Iowa. Western History as taught by Professor Pelzer was no dry, dead subject. A student could expect a "B" if he attended all lectures and turned in four papers a semester, but for an "A" he had to do some digging in the Old Books Section of the library.

While no revisionist, Pelzer used to stimulate our young minds with such questions: "Is Jesse James really dead? Did Billy the Kid die at Ft. Sumner, N. M.? How did George Custer die at The Little Big Horn? Did John C. Fremont really visit all those places or did he just have a good press agent? How could you tell a badman from a lawman in the Old West?" He never answered questions like this, he just asked them.

Pelzer thought Western pulp writers performed a necessary function. While looking for a new twist or sensational yarn, they started to open new doors, but never quite got there, in the professor's opinion. "Most frustrating," he would say.

It's too bad old Professor Pelzer isn't around. I'd love to show him a thick file of documents that prove Bill Roberts, alias Billy the Kid, William H. Bonney, Kid Cody, Hidalgo Kid and Texas Kid, did not die at Ft. Sumner, July 14, 1881, but died at the age of 92, Dec. 27, 1950, outside the newspaper office in Hico, Texas.

Pat Garrett did not kill Billy the Kid, whom history credits with killing 21 men by the time he "died" at the age of 21. Pat Garrett, a native of Alabama, never did collect the \$500 reward offered by New Mexico Territory. In later years, Garrett admitted he killed "someone else by mistake, but not Billy the Kid." Actually, the man Garrett shot was Billy Barlowe.

Just who was "Pat Garrett?" It was an alias. I'm sure Prof. Pelzer would have been delighted to know that Pat Garrett's real name was George Patterson, according to Confederate Underground records. Patterson bounced out of Alabama with a \$10,000 price on his head. It's ironical that as a 6 foot, 4 inch sheriff in New Mexico he should be hunting a short bandit with only a \$500 price.

Patterson himself was a member of the Confederate Underground. The fact he had married Quantrill's daughter probably got him accepted. While Billy the Kid lived until 1950, his supposed assassin didn't fare too well. As a member of the International Anti-Horse Thief Association, "Pat Garrett" knew a few secrets. He knew, for instance, that Jesse James, head of The Knights of the Golden Circle, was running guns to anti-establishment guerrillas in Mexico.

Garrett was also a Federal Marshal, having been appointed to the post by President Theodore Roosevelt. Instead of reporting the gun-running to Washington, Garrett began "leaking" the secret in bars he patronized.

History cooked up quite a wild story of how a young rancher named Wayne Brazil gunned down the 54-year-old Garrett over a property dispute on Feb. 29, 1908. But that

isn't the way it happened, according to Golden Circle records. Golden Circle agents captured Garrett in a Las Cruces bar and took him to an old house in the Organ Mountains of southern New Mexico where he faced a drumhead military trial.

He was asked four questions and the sullen Patterson, alias Garrett, answered "no" to all four. The questions: Did you not appropriate Underground funds for your own use in the State of Alabama? Did you really shoot Billy the Kid?

Did you on at least twelve occasions divulge Confederate Underground activities in Mexico? Is it not true that you are a no-good, conniving, two-timing skunk who would be better off dead than alive?

Old Jesse James chuckled. "Those four questions were loaded - and so were the rifles of the five executioners. It took the 'jury' only two minutes to reach a unanimous verdict of 'guilty' and Patterson was dispatched. Wayne Brazil (his real name was Jim Miller) was one of the executioners. Brazil told his self-defense story to the lawmen and was exonerated. They buried Garrett with fanfare in a cemetery at Las Cruces. The case of Patterson (or Garrett) illustrates the point that we had a few weaklings in our secret organizations, but we always dealt with them rather effectively."

Jesse James kept an eye on the young lad of 8 whom his first wife, Myra Belle Shirley, rechristened "William H. Bonney," throughout Billy's life. Old Jesse lived next door to "Brushy Bill" Roberts for six years in Gladewater, Texas. Billy's second wife was Aunt Lou, greatly admired by women of the community.

When Jesse James "emerged" in 1948, Billy the Kid was with him, but he was greatly ignored because the spotlight was on old Jesse - he was the "hot copy." But most of the oldtimers who gathered to identify Jesse James, also stamped Bill Roberts as the real Billy the Kid. Roberts rode in the second car in the Guthrie, Oklahoma, parade on July 7, 1948, sharing the seat with a daughter of Dr. Frank James, Mary Bleba James Norris.

On Feb. 18, 1949, old John Trammell, alias Sam Skates and The Black Cobra, went before Notary Public Irma Lowe in Guthrie, Oklahoma, and stated, "I am sure to the best of my knowledge and belief that the old cowboy and gunman, lifetime friend of Jesse James who I worked for and rode with a good many years, is Billy the Kid. Billy the Kid rode with us off and on for a long time. He was with us in the Indian Territory driving cattle up the trail.

"Billy was with us in New Mexico, Kansas and Missouri. He was here in Guthrie during July, 1948. I knew him and he knew me at once. He now lives in Texas and calls himself Brushy Bill Roberts.

"Billy the Kid was left-handed, fast with a gun and not very large at the time. He is a little fatter now in old age. Billy the Kid was not killed by Pat Garrett down in New Mexico because Billy had a lot of friends."

Trammell, who was 115 at the time (he died in Guthrie in 1956 at 121) was living at 510 Drexell Street. Trammell knew many of Jesse James' best-kept secrets and Billy the Kid was one of them.

After Billy escaped with his skin from New Mexico, he went to work for Jesse James. He made several trips in and out of Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and once asked Judge I. C. Parker to swear him in as a Deputy U.S. Marshal. Parker knew who Billy was and who he worked for. The Judge lent a sympathetic ear instead of sending him to the gallows. But he turned down Billy's request, saying, "That's carrying things a bit too far!" Billy was just one of the many desperadoes who knew Judge Parker was not above sharing loot with bad-men of his day.

Anyone knows that in the Old West lawmen wore a badge. But did a tin badge a lawman make? When Judge Parker turned down Billy the Kid, he headed for Idaho in disgust. By the time he reached Gunnison, Colorado, he was stone broke. To obtain "grocery money" Billy held up a stagecoach and that's about all he got. One of the passengers, a man from New Mexico, swore the robber was Billy the Kid, but local lawmen smiled. After all, Billy the Kid had been killed in New Mexico. He held up another stagecoach in Utah and this time the loot was bigger.

It got him to Idaho where Billy talked a Federal Judge into giving him a Deputy U.S. Marshal's badge. Billy promptly moved to Rock Springs, Wyoming, joined the Confederate's International Anti-Horse Thief Association, got married and sired two sons. He was using the name Roberts, having been born Ollie Roberts.

Colonel Jesse James visited Marshal Billy Roberts in Rock Springs and learned that he wasn't enamoured with Wyoming, Idaho and Utah winters. After the family retired, Jesse and Billy sat talking in the kitchen.

"I don't blame you for hating these damn Northern winters, I don't like 'em myself," Jesse confessed, "so why don't, you take your U.S. Marshal's badge and head down to Arkansas or Indian Territory."

"Are you kidding me, Colonel?" Billy asked, "why I'd be in Judge I. C. Parker's jurisdiction. I got no use for Parker. When I robbed a few stages in Arkansas, I divided with that crooked judge, but he still refused me a U.S. Marshal's badge a couple of years ago."

Colonel James savoured his cigar and then blew a large smoke ring. "Billy," he said in a low voice, "I've known you since you were a little boy of 8. I wouldn't tell you if I couldn't trust you, but you've been working for the Confederate Underground and your work has been fine.

"Now here's the secret. Washington has been cracking down on Hanging Judge Parker, who is really Cole Younger's brother, John. The Judge recently had a long talk with Cole and the facts have been relayed to me Judge Parker is afraid the damnyankees are getting

ready to toss him out on his ear. He realizes the error of his ways and wants to join the Confederate Underground. What do you think of that, Billy?"

Billy spit in the fire. "I don't trust a man who keeps hopping back and forth over fences."

Jesse chuckled. "For chrissakes, Billy, a few years ago you had your own gang in New Mexico and now you're wearing a Marshal's badge. Who's a fence-hopper?"

Billy laughed. "You got a point, Colonel. Okay, what you're saying is that I might find Judge Parker more responsive this time?"

Jesse waved his cigar. "Right. I'm headed that way when I leave here. I'll have a little talk with the judge. Our records show that Judge Parker has never messed with The Organization. The only two spots on his record are that he joined the damnyankees and became a Republican.

But, hell, Billy, when you became a Marshal and took the oath, you more or less became a damnyankee."

When Marshal Bill Roberts visited Judge I. C. Parker in his Ft. Smith offices a month or so later he found the notorious jurist cordial.

"Come in and sit, Marshal. I'm glad you got that badge," he said.

Billy explained his mission and the Judge replied, "Your Marshal's badge is good anywhere in my jurisdiction. I suggest you register at Ft. Cobb in Indian Territory, Texarkana or even Paris, Texas, if you want."

Marshal Roberts thanked the judge and stood up. "Don't hurry off," the jurist commanded. "By the way, Colonel Roy Hewitt from over in Colorado said you were working for The Organization these days. I always suspected you were."

Billy didn't know what to say, so kept his mouth shut. The Judge continued, "Colonel Hewitt and I are real old friends, we're even related. By the way, Marshal Roberts, while you were out West we had quite a bad shooting in St. Jo, Missouri."

"Yes, Your Honor, I understand Jesse James was killed by a man named Bob Ford," Billy replied.

Judge Parker sat there studying Billy's face. Then he spoke. "Well, these are strange times. So many hoaxes the past few years that I don't know what to think. I've heard that Billy the Kid wasn't really killed down in New Mexico and I hear it wasn't Jesse James who was killed in St. Jo."

Billy, his ears red, thanked the Judge again and beat a hasty retreat. Judge Parker was a strange man. Did he know the truth about Billy's identity? Was he trying to tell him

something about Colonel Roy Hewitt? Who in hell was Colonel Hewitt? As a small boy of 8, he had known Myra Belle's husband as Dick Reed and Bruce Younger. This same man was called Jim McDaniels in the Indian Territory. When Billy went through Colorado en route to Idaho he had heard of Colonel Hewitt. But the man who visited him in Rock Springs, Wyoming, recently had been known as Colonel Carr. Using a number of aliases was quite common in those days, but one question stuck in Billy's mind: Were all these men Jesse W. James, who had supposedly been killed in St. Jo? It would be some years before he would know for sure, but Billy the Kid had begun thinking.

Wearing a badge turned Billy from an outlaw into a law abiding citizen. After touring South America with The Cassidy-Sundance Kid Wild West Show in 1908-1909, "Brushy Bill" Roberts came back to Van Zandt County, Texas, and bought a horse ranch. Later he served as a captain in Pancho Villa's cavalry.

Shortly after World War I he and DeWitt Travis, Quantrill's youngest son, had a wood-hauling contract for the salt works in Grand Saline, Texas. Whites, blacks and Mexican-Americans worked side-by-side for the same wages in the old Free State of Van Zandt according to the man who was to be known as "Uncle Billy" in his later years.

When the salt works got a new Northern manager he brought along two trained Negro office workers with him. Rumours started that all white workers would be laid off and counter rumours began that all Negro workers would be laid off.

"Rumours got worse," Uncle Billy recalled, "and most of them were downright lies like Negro workers dumping whites into boiling vats of salt water. The Sheriff in Canton labelled the possibility of a race riot as being 'silly'. Colonel J. Frank Dalton sent four of his most trusted black employees, John Trammell, Charley Garrett, Big Charley and Lucky Johnson, over to the salt works to 'nose around'. The Colonel said, 'People got to get along - we don't want any race riots in Van Zandt County.'

"A few days later the race riot exploded like a summer thunderstorm. The Negroes had guns and they were using them. Fortunately, Colonel Dalton's four Negroes were armed and so were DeWitt Travis and I. The six of us held off the first rush, but we were cornered in a corner of the salt works. Armed cowboys and farmers poured into town, railroad workers got guns and the deputies began to arrive. But big John Trammell, an old combat veteran, ended the whole thing when he picked up two armed Negroes, slapped the guns from their hands, and then tossed them screaming into a boiling salt vat. John became quite a hero in Van Zandt County."

Uncle Billy and his wife, Aunt Lou, were regular churchgoers, and they were always ready to help the sick, the poor and the shut-ins. Their comfortable ranch home became a hang-out for old Confederate veterans, former outlaws, former Quantrill Raiders and ex-trail drivers.

Jesse James III says, "As long as Yankees or blabbers weren't around, many long-time Southern secrets were discussed. Even in the later 1920s the oldtimers knew their host

was Billy the Kid and that Colonel Dalton was the real Jesse James. The Dalton boys, Wild Bill Longley, Jefferson Davis, John Wilkes Booth, the Younger brothers, Butch Cassidy and Kid Curry all came up for frank discussions. "It was about this tim

e that I was working in law enforcement. A special investigator from the D.A. office called me aside one day and said that he knew that Brushy Bill Roberts was really Billy the Kid. He said excitedly, 'They're about the same size. Brushy Bill is left-handed, has small hands and thick wrists. Let's turn him in and we'll split the reward money.' I said, 'Do you mean I'd turn him in for \$250 as my share of the reward? You're loco, man.'

"But this gave me an idea. I set up the police, deputies, Rangers and Highway Patrol and then I called Brushy Bill and asked him to come right down to the station. When he walked in I shook hands with the old man and eased a special pair of handcuffs on his wrists and tightened them up. Then I turned and walked away, saying, 'So long, Uncle Billy, I'll see you tomorrow.'

"Dumbfounded, with a hurt expression on his face, Uncle Billy asked, 'When is that boy comin' back here? Lou will be awful mad if I don't get home for supper.' Then he stood up, walked over to the sergeant's desk, slid the handcuffs off, and went home. I came back into the station by the back door and the lawmen were still laughing. An old Ranger summed it up when he said, 'Hell, we've known he was Billy the Kid for twenty years. So far as we know, Uncle Billy ain't hurt anybody in all that time.' "

On March 17, 1937, a tremendous explosion ripped apart the modern New London Consolidated School Building, a new structure in East Texas. Many people were dead, while scores were trapped in the debris. Right behind the firemen and law enforcement officials came old Jesse W. James, Uncle Billy Roberts, Quantrill's kin, DeWitt Travis, and about twenty old Confederate veterans. Old Jesse and Uncle Billy didn't come to gawk, they took over rescue crews and helped pull more than a hundred injured children from the wreckage. No wings for Old West badmen?

Before I pick up a Western pulp magazine and read a story titled, "Was Jesse James Ever A Lawman?" I want to get there first. In Old Jesse's eyes he was almost fifty years the chief Enforcer for the Confederate Underground. Depending upon your point of view, this could have been one of the biggest law enforcement jobs in U.S. history. Some might pass it off by claiming he was Chief Executive of The Organization which plundered, hijacked, spied and ran kangaroo courts.

But Jesse W. James wasn't cut out to be a city marshal. He and Cole Younger both held the office for a short time right after the Civil War in Cyene, Texas, but the experiment ended in bloodshed and failure.

Cyene, 14 miles east of present Dallas, was a boom town. Businessmen and residents were moving in faster than buildings could be erected. A hastily chosen city council held a meeting and decided the burgeoning city needed police protection and Jesse and Cole were sworn in.

Their first day on the job a Carpetbagger preacher strode down the boardwalk wearing a derby hat. Jesse was standing in front of a saloon talking to a group of men who had been drinking. A roisterer bet a round of drinks nobody could shoot off the preacher's derby at fifteen paces. Jesse raised his pistol and fired. Zip, the derby flew off into the street. While Jesse joined the boys in the saloon for a free round of drinks the Dare-headed preacher raced around the corner, got on his horse and headed for Union Army camp outside town. The camp, under Colonel Nichols, stood where the large graveyard stands today on the Dallas-Canton-Tyler highway.

In short order, Colonel Nichols led a contingent of troopers and Carpetbaggers to the rear of the saloon. The battle was over in minutes after City Marshal Jesse W. James shot Colonel Nichols over his right eye. Not a single Yankee survived the skirmish.

A former Confederate soldier cried, 'Les git t'hell outa heah! They'll be mo' damnyankees heah raht quick!"

Jesse and Cole Younger removed each other's badges, then they bowed low and tossed them both into a mudhole. Jesse and his band joined the mass exodus from Cyene. Merchants boarded up their stores after cramming what merchandise they could on wagons.

When a big Yankee patrol arrived the next day Cyene was already a ghost town. Its inhabitants had just vanished.

A few nights later Jesse and his friends were sitting around a campfire near Atoke, in the Indian Territory.

"You know, Cole," Jesse said, "I don't think I was cut out to be a city marshal."

"Me neither," Younger replied.

While Jesse failed as a city marshal, he didn't fail as a messiah as far as the Red Bone Indians of the Big Thicket Country in East Texas were concerned. In 1867 Jesse and Quantrill had brought General J. O. Shelby's troops out of Mexico along with a contingent of Red Bone Indians who had been helping Emperor Maximilian.

Later, Jesse had visited Emperor Maximilian when he fled Mexico and settled in the Big Thicket with the Red Bones and the Alabama-Cushetta Indians. Jesse went to this wild East Texas region every few years. When his hair and beard had turned snow white the Red Bones began calling him "The Great White Snow."

There are Indian tribes throughout Latin America who believe that Jesus Christ crossed the Atlantic and walked through Mexico, Central and South America preaching that He was the King of Kings and would return to them as the White Messiah. The Red Bones still believe the legend.

White-haired Jesse was flustered by their attention but he humored them. He had once been a Mormon and had heard the story before. On his death bed Jesse told relatives, "I believe Jesus did walk the Americas. I never heard anyone prove he didn't. Who knows, the white-bearded real Jesus might walk into the Big Thicket some morning. It would sure make those Red Bone Indians mighty happy. They've been waiting for him to come down that mountain for a long, long time."



Dodge City, 1880: rear, Belle Starr, Bat Masterson; Luke Short. Front, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp.

Chapter 14

The Fabulous Confederate Treasure Troves

When the bloody Civil War ground to a halt, the South was in ruins, its people were starving and there was complete chaos, but the Confederacy had \$7 billion in well-hidden gold reserves, which were immediately made available to the Confederate Underground government headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee.

How much gold was stolen, appropriated or hijacked from the hated damnyankees will probably never be known. It is even difficult to estimate. Union Army payrolls were looted, mule trains carrying the precious metal to the private mint, Clark, Gruber & Company (later the U.S. Denver Mint) were hijacked, gold from the Comstock Lode of Nevada and Mother Lode of California was heisted and daring agents in such Northern cities as New York, Washington and Cincinnati raided Union gold stocks.

During the half century that tough, dedicated Colonel Jesse W. James was connected with the Knights of the Golden Circle he ran the value of gold in Confederate caches from \$7 billion to \$21 billion. This was when a troy fine ounce of gold was selling for \$20.67 and placer gold at about \$14 an ounce. In 1934 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt raised the price to \$35 per troy fine ounce, the value of the depository contents soared to \$36 billion. In January of 1973 the price of gold on the European markets topped \$90 an ounce, making the Confederate treasure hoard worth about \$100 billion.

This figure is particularly impressive considering foremost geologists estimate the world's known recoverable gold reserve at 1 billion ounces. No figures are available on Russia, but U.S. gold production has been averaging about 1.5 million ounces a year during the past decade.

During a meeting in Southern California on April 18, 1973, with sons and grandsons of Knights of the Golden Circle members, I was told that the confederate Underground infiltrated gold mines around the world and gave out false production figures. For half a century gold was smuggled into the U.S., including \$32 million from Afrikaners during the Boer War. Everywhere Confederate agents encouraged miners and stamping mill employees to steal and served as "fences." Many former Confederate officers headed West after the war, prospered and tithed up to 50 per cent of their annual incomes.

A decade ago, a national magazine writer charged that at least \$50 billion in U.S. gold had "just disappeared" since colonial times. At one time the U.S. Treasury listed \$22 billion in gold reserves, but the vaults at Fort Knox, Kentucky, are bare by comparison today.

With the price of gold fluctuating almost daily, let's use the \$35 an ounce figure which was with us for almost four decades. Despite its famous Gold Rush, California ranks well down the line in hidden Confederate gold. Montana-Idaho reportedly contains \$4 billion, Texas \$2.5 billion, New York \$1 billion and California has \$500 million.

The amount in the most populous state varies from \$41 million in Sacramento to \$1.6 million in San Gabiel Canyon and \$250,000 in El Monte, which was a Golden Circle headquarters prior to the Civil War. Nevada City, Grass Valley and Placerville each have about \$16 million and Porterville, \$3.3 million. There are lesser amounts in Fort Tejon, San Diego, San Pedro, San Jose, San Francisco and Paso Robles, according to the oldtimers.

New Mexico depositories contain treasure worth \$630 million, while Canada has \$2.5 billion, Georgia \$413 million, the Carolinas \$500 million, New England \$333 million, Mexico \$500 million, Panama \$83 million, the Canary Islands \$83 million, Illinois \$33 million and Oregon, Arizona and Nevada each have \$333 million. There is hidden gold in nearly every state in the Union and \$83 million lies buried right under Castro's nose in Cuba.

The grandson of a Golden Circle member volunteered, "He told me the depositories or caches were located in the following areas: near state or territorial capitals, near railroad rights-of-way, along principal rivers, beside stage or wagon roads, around Confederate-owned livery stables, near Indian agency headquarters, near bridge or ferry crossings, near smelters or mills and along natural landmarks like the Continental Divide.

"Some of the caches might be safely opened by weekend treasure hunters, but don't trifl with the big depositories. They're booby-trapped from all directions and more than one snooper has been blown to bits by waterproofed explosives which are still deadly."

A number of daring coups which enriched Confederate caches will be described in this chapter. Under Colonel James' direction, Golden Circle agents were sent to Spain and Mexico to ferret out long-lost treasures buried in the United States. The agents promised a percentage of the take to informers. Treasures were dug up and the promises were kept. In addition, restless Golden Circle agents ran down Indian and old prospector legends of lost or buried gold. Many of these treasures were retrieved and placed in Confederate caches. Other gold was dug up in Mexico and Latin America.

In 1930, J. Frank Dobie wrote, "Lost Mines and Buried Treasures of the Southwest." Old Jesse bought a copy and it was soon dog-eared and pages marked with strange symbols. Old Jesse chuckled, "Frank did a hell of a good job compiling all this stuff, but my agents long since checked out 90 per cent of the legends and in many cases The Organization made off with the treasure."

On his 100th birthday in 1944, old Jesse told his closest relatives, "There are no free and easy Confederate treasures, any that an amateur or tenderfoot could locate and dig out on a weekend. He'd need a hell of a lot of inside information. There is a 'key' to Confederate treasure troves. In 1916 we sealed our Golden Circle records for fifty years. So in 1966 - I will be long gone - it won't belong to anybody. I will leave the 'key' to my grandson Lee Howk (Jesse James III). There are no written records of the caches, just signs and symbols, but Lee will have the 'key' - that I assure you."

As an oldster, Jesse often lamented the "untimely deaths of two noble adversaries, detective Allan Pinkerton and financier Jay Gould." Pinkerton died in 1884, Gould in 1892. No, Jesse didn't kill them, but he admitted he had plenty of opportunities.

"Pinkerton and his men made one basic error," old Jesse said, "they were looking for Jesse James' Gang, and not the Confederate Underground Army and they thought the Golden Circle ceased when Lee surrendered. We weren't about to straighten 'em out.

"In the late 1970s, I heard about a law officers' convention in Chicago and decided to attend as a deaf preacher. I was heavily disguised with gold caps on my front teeth and carried an ear horn in one hand and a Bible in the other. I managed to get myself a seat at Allan Pinkerton's table. If I was asked a question, I'd make heavy use of the ear horn and make an irrelevant, but always pious answer. I'm sure Allan thought I was stone deaf.

"I was delighted when Pinkerton began talking about the 'James Gang'. He had a tendency to brag and he told about elaborate plans to capture the James 'bandits'. Then he grew serious and said, 'Washington has called me in several times concerning thefts of rather appreciable amounts of gold, wondering if the 'James Gang' could be involved. But I told them that Jesse and Frank James are just penny-ante crooks concentrating on \$10,000 to \$20,000 bank holdups.'

"After lunch, I found myself sharing a washroom with Pinkerton and I was tempted to kill him. It would have been so easy, but I reasoned that Pinkerton had the wrong conception of our real activities. Let him believe we were minor crooks and we would go right on filling Confederate caches. That night I told my experiences to Missouri Jesse (Dingus) James, my cousin, and he was blazing mad. He fairly shouted, 'I think you just got 'buck fever', cousin Jesse, and couldn't pull the trigger! You could have snuffed him out so easily - but didn't.'"

Financier Jay Gould enriched Confederate caches or coffers of Jesse's organization by \$30 million, most of it taken at pistol point, but some by shrewd manipulation.

"I was in Chicago and read in the papers," Jesse recalled in later years, "that the great financier Jay Gould was going to attend a banquet that night. Pulling a few strings, I got myself invited. I went dressed as a miner. Of course, I was heavily disguised. I developed a bad limp, carried my left arm in a sling and an ear horn in the other. This was in the late 1880s.

"I went brazenly over to the table where Gould was and sat down. He jumped up and shook my hand and asked how I got hurt. I finally had him shouting right in my ear horn. So I nodded and mumbled, "Mining - explosives." I pulled out a chamois bag and rolled some pretty good-sized gold nuggets on the table and Gould's eyes grew big. 'Where?' he asked and I replied, 'I think it's Tuesday.' He kept on asking questions, but I was unable to hear and gave him the

wrong answers. He finally gave up on me, considering me hopelessly deaf. That's what I wanted him to think.

"While I ate, I placed my ear horn on the floor so Jay Gould felt free to discuss his railroad plans with others at the table, who were all his associates. I learned plenty that night. Then Gould began complaining-about 'raids' on his payrolls. An associate said, 'Maybe Jesse James isn't dead after all, Mr. Gould.' My heart almost stopped pumping. Gould replied, 'I'm going to be candid with you gentlemen. I, too, have heard that Jesse wasn't really murdered back in '82. In a way, the pattern does resemble that used by Jesse James during the Civil War.'

"He stole a lot of money from me and I had him outlawed by pulling a few strings in Washington. In a way, I hated to because did I ever tell you I knew the entire James family when they had the plantation down in Kentucky? Well, that's another story. I've done a lot of thinking about our financial drain and it smacks of Jesse's guerrilla tactics. Hell, if Jesse James walked into this room right now I wouldn't be one bit surprised. He's a wily one, slippery as a goddam eel and durable as an elephant. But I'll tell you one thing, Jesse James never lacked in guts or daring.'

"Needless to say, that was quite an accolade coming from old Gould. I had a hard time going to sleep that night. It was amazing how close he had come to figuring me out. They say every crook has a modus operandi. If mine was following a pattern in Gould's mind, it was time we altered our methods. So we did. I didn't want to read such a headline: JESSE JAMES ALIVE - LEADER OF CONFEDERATE UNDERGROUND ARMY."

The Golden Circle spared no expense in burying its gold. It employed the best engineers and the most modern equipment available. Jesse said, "I always insisted on using either Negroes or Indians as laborers. Seldom employed a white man. I understood Indians and Negroes and on the whole they were more trustworthy."

Many of the caches were located near railroad lines, although some were situated in remote regions. Jesse James employed a large number of railroad detectives or agents, who rode his own line and those belonging to the competition. Sometimes engineers, along with detectives, were paid by the Golden Circle to "keep their eyes open" along certain stretches and to report anything suspicious. Of course, these paid employees were not told what they were protecting, but an extra \$50 a month kept them vigilant.

Mining companies also employed a network of agents to report "unusual activities." The Confederate Underground was busy sinking shafts for caches, many of them booby trapped, and this could pass for "mining." Golden Circle agents were merciless and many a "snooper" was tracked down and killed before he could file a report. "Shoot - and ask questions later," was Colonel James' standing order to his secret operatives. Another order was, "Better to kill a man than be sorry." On rare occasions a Golden Circle agent would violate his blood oath and attempt to slip back and recover some of the buried loot. The man was invariably shot because Jesse kept a concealed guard around a new cache

for generally a month. After that, it was periodically inspected to see if it had been tampered with.

One peace officer in Oklahoma spent twenty years working to open a Confederate trove. How he learned about it is unknown, but old Jesse did some checking and found out the officer's father had been a member of the Golden Circle. Jesse reasoned his father had revealed the secret on his death bed.

Trusting no one, the peace officer did the digging himself. Apparently his father had told him where the booby-trap was because the digger tunneled around this area. The officer never told his wife what he was doing on weekends but said, "If I ever disappear, get hold of the Texas Rangers and have them get in touch with Colonel J. Frank Dalton."

A month later, Jesse sat in the widow's kitchen and it suddenly came to him what had happened to her husband. A trusted crony drove Jesse to the spot. The cache was concealed by heavy undergrowth. Jesse told his friend to wait while he climbed the hill. The old Golden Circle chief saw at a glance what had happened. Engineers had dammed up a spring and this small body of water had broken through the digger's tunnel, drowning him. For a moment, Jesse stood and paid a tribute to the oldtimers' precautions. Then he went back into town and told the anxious widow, "Well, I thought I might know where your husband was, but he ain't. I'm sorry."

Did old Jesse ever open any of the Confederate caches? Yes, he did during the depression. He opened a cache in Texas and took out \$10 million to help prop up three Texas banks, which had been founded by oldtime Confederate families. He reasoned, "The oath stated they'd never be touched unless the 'nation' was in dire straits. Well, these three banks were fighting to keep their doors open. There were breadlines and people were desperate and angry. I'd have opened every damn Confederate cache in the country to keep the United States from going Bolshevik and would not have violated my oath in any way."

Even with his vast financial empire, the old man was pressed for cash during the depression. Accompanied by his grandson, Jesse III, he retrieved three of his "personal caches." He took \$125,000 from a cave near Gad's Hill, Missouri; about \$75,000 from a cemetery in northeastern Arkansas and \$100,000 from the east side of an ancient Indian burial mound on the Bayou Macon north of Delhi, Louisiana.

Jesse III recalls, "That was quite a sight. We checked into the Washington Urey Hotel in downtown Shreveport. The year was 1939. The tires on my car were almost flat from the heavy load. Old Jesse looked over the hotel's help and selected two husky young Negroes. He asked, 'Can you boys keep your mouths shut?' Then he gave each of them a \$100 bill and they hauled the treasure, mostly in gold coins, up to our room. Then Jesse called a banker friend, told him to bring \$100,000 in 'big bills', an armored car and a couple of husky men.

"The old banker's eyes bulged out when he saw the grain sacks full of coins. He'd known Jesse for years so couldn't have been too surprised. Jesse said, 'Now I counted this stuff some fifty years ago when I buried it. It amounted to \$100,000 then and we got all of it. I'll settle for \$100,000 in green stuff - it's handier to carry around. Some of these coins are quite old and are probably collector's items, but my loss is your gain. You can count it down at the bank to make sure I didn't cheat you. You know I'm Jesse James so you can't be too damn careful.' Well, the old banker almost apologized when he handed Jesse \$100,000 in \$100 bills. His men took the coins and departed. When we got ready to retire, old Jesse stuck his fat wallet under the mattress and made sure his .38 calibre Smith & Wesson was loaded. In a minute he was snoring."

If Jesse III has the "key" to the string of Confederate depositories, why doesn't he just go ahead and dig them up?

He replies, "The answer to this is quite complex. First, you have the federal and state governments and federal judges to consider. If my grandfather and The Knights of the Golden Circle stole this gold from the federal government would it be considered 'treasure trove' or 'contraband'? Various states have worked out 'treasure trove' laws which in most cases are quite fair.

"But what if it is 'contraband'? That is another matter and the federal government would confiscate it, legally saying it was merely recovering property stolen from it. What if I went to Washington and worked out an arrangement with the President of the United States and the Congress -say a 50-50 split? I would use the argument, 'Do you want the stuff to remain hidden in the ground or would you rather have \$30 billion unexpected funds to play with?' Maybe I'd settle for 10 per cent, or 5 per cent or 1 per cent. The deal was all set so I'd borrow money and go ahead and dig out the rich Curious Mule Treasure. While I was wiping the sweat off my brow and waiting for federal auditors to weigh in the treasure, some screwball federal judge might rule my agreement was 'illegal' and it would all go to the federal coffers. I'd be up the proverbial creek without a paddle!"

Jesse III found himself in such a position in 1962 when he and an Indian guide from the old Santa Clara Indian Reservation at Espanola, New Mexico, found a \$700,000 gold cache stashed away by Grandpa Jesse in the mid 1880s. Old Jesse had grubstaked an old prospector who had a mine in the James Mountains near Coyote, New Mexico. The prospector hit and Jesse came down with mules to claim his one-third share. There were 14Va 100-pound ingots of 87 per cent gold. Taking a shortcut to Santa Fe, old Jesse's mule train was bombarded by a violent storm and half of his mules drowned. He and his men buried the gold under a ledge. Before he died, old Jesse said, "I'll give you the directions. It was not Confederate gold, but belonged to me so it's yours when you find it."

After Jesse III and his Indian guide uncovered the gold, an unexpected heavy snow blanketed the area. When he went back in the spring, Jesse III found the Indian had moved the gold, which was located on the Santa Clara Reservation. The guide had

"blabbed" and three or four Indians were killed over the gold discovery incident. So Jesse III, who had originally promised the chief that the reservation could have half of the gold, tried to get his former guide to disclose the new hiding place. When all efforts failed, Jesse III went into U.S. Federal District Court in Albuquerque and the judge ruled the gold belonged to Jesse III.

"Despite the decision, the Indian still refused to disclose its new hiding place. In the meantime, a newspaper publisher applied a little heat in Washington and legal blocks were strewn in my path. I didn't have the funds to fight any more so I went back to Colorado.

"The New Mexico case, which I won, opened up quite a can of worms. Sweet old Aunt Cora, the daughter of Jesse Woodson James and Maggie Matuska, a Sioux Indian woman, was living in Nashville, Tennessee, and when she heard about the decision she immediately began an action to attach the cache, charging she was a closer relative to old Jesse Woodson James than I was.

"And other James relatives living throughout the country under assumed names began to make noises. Now, I don't mean all of old Jesse's kin. Some of them stood by me through thick and thin. They had kept their names during the many years old Jesse was an exile in his own land. But I suddenly realized that 32nd cousins would hire shysters and have their hands out once any of old Jesse's assets were uncovered. It was a very sobering thought.

"Now the same thing could happen if the old Confederate depositories were opened. There would be a flurry of lawsuits of every description, judges would hand down some complicated and strange decisions, the country might be in chaos - it seems to be an old American custom to fight over inheritances or recovered treasure."

Jesse III and his attorney, John Gately, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1967 located "The Master Compass Treasure" site in New Mexico by following old symbols, which professors of natural history term ancient Indian pictographs. "A treasure," Jesse III says, "just doesn't leap out at you and yell, 'Here I am. I am a buried treasure!'"

After taking a false trail or two by misreading the "compass feathers," the hikers located the hidden springs and suddenly stood in awe. Jesse III said, "There carved on a wall in all its majesty was a great historical panel which told the strange story of the Confederate 'lost cause'. I had left my camera in the car and neither John nor I were prepared to dig that day so we made plans to return with a pickup truck in two weeks. Then John made a grievous error. He took off his scarf and tied it to a bush at the edge of the great panel, arguing that we'd be able to spot the scarf from the road below. I compounded the error by not removing the scarf."

Apparently the two hikers had been spotted by a couple of young Mexican-American boys, who were prepared to dig as soon as the pair left. The lads found a chest containing \$55,000 in rare, century-old coins, but the bank paid them only face value. "But," says

Jesse III, "the main treasure taken from Grandpa's wagon train still lies buried somewhere near the great panel. John Gately died, I got involved in the Santa Clara Reservation mess, then family illnesses and I've never been back."

Because Jesse III was raised at his old Confederate grandfather's knee, I've detected that Jesse III has a great sentimentality about the old caches. A few years ago, Jesse III gathered two trusted friends in Dallas and formalized plans to open a Confederate depository containing \$8 million in Oklahoma. Jesse III said he had been studying the symbols and believed he had pinpointed the cache.

"I don't remember why, but one of my friends brought along a tenderfoot, a real ringer. It was February, cold and damp and I caught a severe cold. Then it began to rain and I was unable to spot an important clue, two large boulders, side by side. I suggested we return to town and try at a later date. The greenhorn jumped up, yelling, 'You're trying to gyp me out of my \$2 million share! I never trusted Texans anyway!' On the way back into town, facing pneumonia, I asked myself, 'Why am I doing this? Who is this damn fool I just met two days ago who is demanding his share and accusing me of dishonesty?' Back in town, I told my friends I was calling off the hunt and returning to Dallas. I thought of all the blood that had been shed by those old Southerners to steal the gold and the sweat they'd expended to cache it away. This greenhorn had killed any desire I had to retrieve the trove."

Jesse III says the treasure symbols appear to be everywhere. "I've observed them in Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Iowa, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Idaho, Washington and even Florida." The symbols are not always arrows, turkey tracks, snakes and birds, but sometimes they are the old Confederate Army Code. Every venture old Jesse's organization did was in multiples of 3s, 5s and 7s. On rare occasions they switched to 4s, 7s and 11s."

If the boobytraps, sudden floods and hidden spears don't get the treasure hunter, "black damp" will. Colorado City, now Colorado Springs, along with Canton, Texas, became a Confederate Underground center after the capital closed down in Nashville in about 1884. Old Jesse ordered a network of deep tunnels and rooms built underground. Work went on so quietly that residents never dreamed they even existed. At one time, precious metal and guns were stored in the secret rooms and tunnels, but they have been sealed up to keep out children. Without being ventilated, poking into the labyrinth of tunnels would be suicide. Two sniffs of "black damp" will kill you.

Following is a list of approximately a hundred Confederate depositories (in some cases the amounts are given):

CODE A

1. Large treasure under Longhorn Mountain.
2. Large treasure under Saddle Mountain.
3. Rocky Crossing Treasure (\$2 million).
4. Rocky Ford Treasure.

CODE B

1. Treasure of the Devil's Promenade.
2. Treasure of the Stage & Wagon Ford on Spring River.
3. Treasure of the Ouawpaw Deposit.
4. Treasure of the Tall Tombstone Deposit.
5. Treasure of the Government Blacksmith Shop.
6. Treasure of Pretty Water Creek.
7. Treasure of the Small, Rocked-up Water Well.

CODEC

1. Flint Hills Treasures
2. Navajo Mountain Treasures (gems and gold).
3. Elk Springs (Quantrill's Mystery).

CODE D

1. Ram Springs Treasure at Moffat Community.
2. Big Draft Horse Treasure near Moffat.
3. Crow Ranch Treasure.
4. Howling or Barking Dogs' Spring Treasure.
5. Trail of Indian Tears (\$200,000 in silver dollars).
6. Pewter Churn Treasure (\$115,000).
7. Fat Man's Greed Treasure (\$500,000).
8. Arbuckle on Cat Den Mountain (two vinegar barrels of money).
9. Fat Man's Misery (\$100,000 in cave).
10. Coalgate RR Treasure (\$150,000).

CODE E

1. Hollow Mountain (guns, treasure, supplies).
2. River Ford Wagon Crossing
3. A Face Looking Up; A Face Looking Down.
4. Mountain Lion Attack Treasure (under water).
5. Railroad City Treasure.
6. Nine Mile Treasure.
7. Jefferson Island Treasure (\$125,000).
8. Three Rivers Treasure (\$30 million, gold).
9. No See Urn Treasure (\$1.5 million).
10. Copper King Treasure (\$2 million).
11. Corkleg Bartender Treasure (\$40,000).
12. Last Chance Gulch (\$60,000).
13. Diamond City Treasure (\$25 million).
14. Bozeman Trail Treasures (gold dust).
15. Prickly Pear Canyon Treasure (high grade ore).

16. Crown Butte Treasure.
17. Haystack Butte Treasure.
18. Square Butte Treasure.
19. Three Priests Butte (\$25,000).
20. St. Peter's Gate Treasure.
21. Bird Tail Trail Treasures (\$5 million).
22. Whoop Up Trail Treasures (\$9 million).
23. Indian Heap Sick.(\$100,000).
24. Little Belt & Big Belt Treasures (four caches).
25. Sand Coulee Coal Mine Treasure (\$38,000).

CODE F

1. Vanishing Wagon Train Treasure (66 tons, gold).
2. White Tombstone Treasure (\$50,000).
3. Twin Lakes Treasure (\$150,000 in high grade ore).
4. Chinese Riot Treasures.
5. Holy Cross Treasure (huge shipment, gold bars).
6. Ft. San Francisco Treasure (\$55 million).
7. Orphan Butte Treasure (\$64,000).
8. La Vita Pass Treasures.
9. Ft. Massachusetts Treasure.
10. Ft. Garland Treasure (\$1 million).
11. Sangre de Cristo Treasures (five or six).
12. Wagon Wheel Treasures (five or six).
13. Wheel of Fortune Treasures.
14. San Luis Trail Treasure.
15. Chili Narrow Gauge RR Treasures.
16. Master Compass Crater Treasure (41 gold bars?).
17. Col. Kit Carson's Battle Against Texans Treasure.
18. Ojo Calienta (\$1 million).
19. Spanish Grist Mill Treasure.
20. Water Tank cache (\$122,000).
21. Four Kings Treasure (huge amount).
22. Two Chickens Treasure (\$35,000).
23. Chama River RR Bridge Treasure (\$250,000).
24. Hidden Rich Pacer Diggings.
25. Confederate Army Paymaster Cache (Glorietta, chest).

CODE G

1. Wagon Wheel Mount Treasure.
2. Maxwell Trading Post Treasure.
3. Cimarron Creek Crossing Treasure.

4. Red River Ghost Town Treasure (\$250,000).
5. Willis Springs Caches. (\$165,000).
6. Old Raton Pass High Road Treasure.
7. Dick Wooten's Old Toll Gate Treasure.
8. Coronado Trail West Treasure.
9. Old Stage Relay Hotel (10 miles south of Raton).
10. Tree & Fence Treasures (Half a dozen).
11. Santa Fe RR Treasure (near Watrous).
12. Look at the Hill Treasure (west of Ft. Union).
13. Old Santa Fe Trail Treasure (North of Ft. Union).
14. Dim Trail Treasure (north and west of Ft. Union).
15. Eagle Nest Treasure.
16. Taos Mission Treasure (\$60,000).
17. Elizabethtown Treasure.
18. Forks of Two Rivers Treasure.
19. San Juan Indian Trading Post Caches (\$175,000).
20. Hoot Owl Trees Treasures.
21. Ox Cart Treasure. (\$30,000).
22. Indian Agent Treasure (\$30,000).
23. U.S. Army Pay Chests (\$40,000, plus \$90,000, coins).
24. Spanish Gold Smelter Ruins Cache (gold bars).
25. Indian Exiles Treasure (\$20,000).

Jesse James III hastens to explain the above list is only a small part of the Confederate caches or depositories. "Remember, there are 26 letters in the alphabet and we've gone only from A through G."

The Wild Cat Bluffs Treasure was buried in a bloodthirsty way in 1864, proving that violence begets violence. Colonel Jesse W. James with a cavalry brigade surprised a Union Army wagon train loaded with supplies near Wild Cat Bluffs, Arkansas. The wagons were guarded by a Union regiment of Negro infantrymen under white officers.

After a brief battle, the wagons and Union troops were captured. The wagons, loaded with salt, quinine, bandages, horseshoes, ammunition, new carbines, shoes, boots, etc., were immediately wheeled south to Confederate Army supply depots.

Meanwhile, James ordered a search of Union officers and men. The Confederates were horrified to find 250 wedding and engagement rings with white fingers still in the rings. At this time a detail was sent out by General Marmaduke who reported that scores of women and girls had been violated, homes looted, barns burned and cows, chickens and bedding stolen. Worst of all, several hundred white women were found who had lost their ring fingers by brutal amputation.

James ordered a swift Confederate Drumhead Military Trial held, the accused were given a chance to speak if they wanted to, but the evidence spoke for itself. All 1,000 Union

officers and men were condemned to die. A deep gulley was selected as the execution site.

As firing squads shot the Yankees, bodies were tossed into the gulley. The loot collected by Rebel officers amounted to four bushel baskets of rings, lockets, bracelets, watches, plus money. In addition, a paychest held two months' pay for about 1,800 men. It was mostly in gold and silver coins. The loot was stuffed in a crack about a third of the way up the face of the bluff and the dead Yankees and loot were covered up. Wild Cat Bluff is situated not far from Centerpoint, Arkansas.

When former Confederate President Jefferson Davis moved to Canton, Texas, in 1867, he reportedly brought \$1 billion in gold with him. Additional billions were added to the huge, well-built booby-trapped depository. Possibly about 70,000 gold bars remain. It was probably from this depository that old Jesse James removed \$10 million during the depression to bolster three sagging Texas banks. A \$10 million "withdrawal" would hardly have made a small dent in the riches stored there.

However, Jesse James III says it could have been the Three Rivers Depository in central Texas which his grandfather opened. It reportedly contains more than \$3 billion in gold bars and it, too, is heavily booby-trapped. Known locally as The Gold Mine, the depository has been the site of occasional bloodshed. In the 1920s, while on an inspection trip, old Jessie surprised four men tampering with the entrance to a shaft. He shot and killed three of them, wounded the j^fyv so "he could spread the word that burglars ain't tolerated around The Gold Mine."

The "Weep No More My Lady" Treasure was buried in the State of Georgia a short time after the Civil War ended. The former governor of Georgia, rather than have the state's gold reserves fall into the hands of the hated Carpetbaggers, turned it over to the Confederate Underground. About \$2 billion was involved. Golden Circle agents arrived and immediately hollowed a huge wagon load of logs. The gold was secured inside. Pulled by 18 oxen and convoyed by two dozen unobtrusive agents, the huge logging wagon left the old capital of Georgia and moved to the Chattahoochee River and a designated place on a bluff.

Five tombstones were "borrowed" from an old cemetery en route to the river and placed in a following wagon. The treasure was buried 11 feet deep and the five tombstones were used to mark the spot.

Another rich Confederate depository is located under an "ordinary-looking mountain" somewhere off the old Nashville Pike not far from the old Underground capital in Nashville. It took 18 professional miners and two parties of Negro laborers 18 months to erect this "model depository". Old Confederate Underground records reveal \$600 million in gold was stored in the vaults when they were completed in about 1870. In the next ten years more gold was put away and the cache today may be worth \$5 billion.

Colonel Jesse James personally selected the Colorado depository site for The Treasure of

the Curious Mule in about 1885. Several tons of placer gold and a quantity of gold bars were placed in a cave on the side of a narrow canyon about the time that Confederate Underground engineers completed a dam below the site. The ensuing lake covered the cave entrance with water at least 20 feet deep. Only skin divers would be able to locate the cave's entrance.

One of the largest Confederate Underground depositories contains "The Vanishing Wagon Train Treasure" near Fairplay, Colorado. In 1869, Jesse W. James rode all the way from Malad City, Idaho, to lead ex-Confederate raiders in the capture of a wagon train hauling 66 tons of gold dust and nuggets, known as placer gold. All horses, mules and oxen vanished. The treasure was buried 22 feet deep under a big slab of rock at an elevation of 13,000 feet. The wagon train was en route from Granite to Denver, Colorado, when overtaken by Jesse and his Golden Circle agents. The treasure is probably recoverable only in the month of July because of climatic conditions

Several million dollars is buried underwater about a mile east of the oldest Brazos River bridge in Waco, Texas. The gold is in a steel safe which belonged to Jesse W. James. Jesse James III a few years ago tied steel cables to the safe, but the lines snapped twice in trying to lift the heavy safe. In addition, Jesse III encountered cave-ins and serious water problems.

The Cat Den Butte Depository in west Texas contains \$30 million in gold, plus some silver. Although the vaults are under a mountain, the main shaft is in the southeast corner of an old Mexican cemetery. The cache is heavily booby-trapped.

During the latter part of the Civil War, Golden Circle spies in the Sacramento-Grass Valley region of California reported a huge amount of gold was being hauled to a private mint in Sacramento and square-cornered coins were being minted. The coins were made in two sizes. Larger coins had \$23.40 stamped on them, while the smaller ones \$16.40.

The Confederates, perhaps more adapted to guerrilla warfare, liked to travel in small units, but not the Union Army. A long wagon train carrying \$18,000,000 in the new coins left Sacramento with a band playing. A heavy Union cavalry guard escorted the groaning wagons.

After a slow, tiring journey the wagon train reached Ft. Union in New Mexico Territory and rested a couple of days. Then it proceeded toward Ft. Leavenworth via the southern Santa Fe Trail past Flag Springs in what is now western Oklahoma.

Then the Confederates closed the trap. Capt. John Lamb led a company of General Hood's cavalry and was joined by 60 Texas Rangers. After a short battle, the wagons were captured intact and driven toward Llano County, Texas, where the coins were buried in the Camel and the Straw Cave on the ranch owned by Captain Bragg.

There were two entrances to the cache and both were "protected" by grim skeletal heads. Jesse W. James was part owner of the Bragg Ranch, but was a silent partner. In 1929, the

city marshal of a small Oklahoma community somehow acquired depository ledgers (all in Confederate code) and tortured old Jesse's Negro helpers in a vain attempt to gain additional information. The marshal was executed by The Organization and Jesse went to the cave on the ranch and booby-trapped both entrances. In 1949, a relative of the executed marshal tried to enter the cache, tripped a wire and the booby-trap blew him apart.

Not only gold and silver are stored in old Confederate Underground depositories, sometimes it's rare old liquor. In 1964 Jesse III uncovered a list of items in a Wyoming cache. In the cave are about 20,000 gallons of rare whisky which should be fairly well-aged by now. There are about a hundred cases of Winchester rifles, several hundred pistols, a large quantity of ammunition, canned goods and tools. Rounding out the list is about \$150,000 in gold and silver coins. There are cases of Borden's condensed milk and Denver-canned beef.

Old Jesse Woodson James, who had supervised the burying of billions of dollars in gold while serving as chief of the Golden Circle once got tripped up when he tried burying \$100,000 in 100 dollar bills. He was living with Jesse III in Gladewater, Texas, during an oil boom in the late 1930s. One morning the old man got up just before dawn and went to the backyard with a shovel and a steel fishing tackle box. He dug a hole about 3 feet deep between two fruit trees, while his grandson watched from the window. Jesse III was in the bathroom when his grandfather returned from his early morning chore. Nothing was said about the cache and shortly after breakfast, an auto horn sounded and old Jesse was off to the oil fields to buy or sell leases.

Jesse III then went to the back yard, dug up the box from its shallow hole, took it in the house and counted the money it contained. Jesse III says, "I asked myself why anybody would bury that much money in such a shallow hole. So I grabbed the shovel and dug the hole about 10 feet deep. Burying the box, I covered my tracks."

In about three months, old Jesse went out at dawn, dug down three feet, shook his head and came back to the kitchen, a perplexed look on his face.

His grandson asked, "What's the matter, Grandpa, is something troubling you?"

After a moment, the old man said, "Well, I guess I'm getting old or losing my marbles. I buried a tackle box with \$100,000 in it in the backyard. Or I thought I did, anyway. On the other hand, maybe some thieving polecat dug it up!"

"Feigning great sympathy, I went to the backyard with the old man, took the shovel and began to dig. I found the box at 10 feet, much to old Jesse's relief," his grandson said.

The old man scratched his head. "Hell's fire, I guess I don't know my own strength!"

Jesse III leaned on his shovel and asked, "Grandpa, why in hell don't you put that much money in the bank?"

Old Jesse replied, "I use hard cash when I deal in oil and gas leases. I just won't take checks from buzzards a man meets today so I set an example by paying cash. Hell, boy, I got over a million dollars in cash in paper bags stacked up behind my desk. But this particular \$100,000, well, it was my 'coffee money' and it belongs to me. I didn't want to lose it."

For a half century, Jesse W. James kept two accounts, one for The Knights of the Golden Circle and one for himself.

He never got the two mixed up - and he never really forgot anything he ever buried.

Chapter 15

The Sunset Years

Many oldtimers, long past their prime and waiting for a knock by the Grim Reaper, half doze and half reminisce while the world passes them by. But Jesse W. James wasn't such a man. He lived life to the fullest and greeted each new dawn with the bright optimism that had characterized his entire life. His closest relatives and associates had presumed that the old man's giant economic empire had been wiped out in the 1929 Wall Street crash. Old Jesse would appear as a dirty, broke old bum and study their reaction.

If they offered a word in pity, Jesse would launch a minilecture which went like this: "Now we all know that Aaron Burr disagreed with Alexander Hamilton, who was determined to involve our young republic in the international banking system. So Aaron Burr shot Hamilton in a duel. By his act, Burr was pictured as a scamp and history claims he was a bad hombre. The truth is that Burr was a real patriot, a true American and if I had my way we'd open his grave and lay a Congressional Medal of Honor on his casket. International warlords and bankers are at the root of most of the world's ills."

But old Jesse, who didn't trust banks, was even wealthier during the Depression because the dollar would buy more. He had gold buried in several dozen personal caches, but instead of playing it safe he was down in East Texas oilfields speculating like mad during the height of the depression.

Jesse had heavy investments in the distilling industry and this galled his brother, Dr. Frank, who after decades of heavy drinking, became a rabid prohibitionist. When Frank would rant at the whiskey industry, Jesse would kid him. "It's one thing being a Prohibitionist, Frank, but you needn't become an Exhibitionist!"

Generally when a man reaches his 100th birthday, he tells the press his longevity was the result of "abstinence from liquor, smoking, chewing tobacco and wild women." Old Jesse was no stranger to all four of these vices. He liked an occasional "nip" from the bottle, but about twice a year he'd go on a real binge. In 1937 he got loaded, fell and broke his hip, but recovered fully. Again in 1947, he fell and broke the same hip on another binge, but this time he became an invalid.

Jesse knew Texas Rangers, police chiefs, sheriffs, and Highway Patrolmen for miles around. Jesse James III recalls, "You could almost mark the calendar in advance of the old man's wingdings. He'd sneak out and a couple of days later some friendly lawman would call and say, 'Howk will you come down and get this old Rebel out of our cooler?' So I'd go down, get him out and then cuss him good and make him cringe. Then we'd both wind up having a good laugh." The old man read every book ever written on the Civil War and would snort, "The damn historians still haven't got it right." He was even more critical of histories on the West. "This is all just stupid trash. Maybe someday somebody I will come along and set the record straight."

His old crony, Brushy Bill Roberts (Billy the Kid) would chuckle. "Well, we're both hot and wanted for murder. Do you want to stick your neck out, Jesse? I'm certainly too busy enjoying life to risk a hangman's noose."

Even in his 90s, old Jesse liked to prove why he was the greatest gunman in the history of the West. Armed with two heavy calibre pistols, he'd toss a target into the air and keep it bouncing with twelve straight shots. Sometimes, he'd do it before large audiences, concluding such exhibitions with the comment, "I'd like to have seen Wild Bill Hickock, Buffalo Bill Cody or Wyatt Earp do that!"

Jesse had two favorite daughters, Gertie Clark Murphy and Cora James Anderson, but in his old age "cussed out" both of them. He accused Cora, a half Indian, of "putting on airs and trying to keep up with Southern high society" and chastised her for "expensive and extravagant tastes." He'd say, "Look, Cora, you belong to the DAR and OES, ain't that enough? Do you want Southern society people making war whoops behind your back?"

The old man pouted because Gertie Murphy "neglected" him. Gertie, the recipient of a giant trust fund, on a couple of occasions sent her private secretary to America with an invitation to Jesse to come to England to live out his days with her. Refusing her secretary, Jesse would fume "You tell her she's too damn busy being a butterfly with those stuffy British society folks. Be sure to tell her that."

When Jesse was looking after his business interests, he read newspapers, magazines and better books. He was fairly adept at ventriloquism, but probably best at chewing the fat with his old cronies. During the Texas Centennial celebration in 1936 at Dallas, Jesse was featured in the Ripley Believe-It-Or-Not exhibit and was a hit.

In 1939, old Jesse insisted on visiting his old friend, Milt Hinkle, who was working with Western show horses at the New York World's Fair. Each night, the old men would sit and gossip about oldtimers they had known like Pawnee Bill, Bill Penny, Pistol Pete Easton, Louis Baker, Colonel Zach Mulhall, Colonel Zach Miller and his two brothers, George and Joe, and Marshal Orrington

(Catfish Jack) Lucas.

Old Milt Hinkle, who died in 1972 in Florida, was writing a book, "Cowgirls of Back When", but death stilled his pen and I have his old incomplete manuscript. Milt and the incomparable Will Rogers watched Colonel Mulhall shoot and kill his daughter's unnamed suitor after a Wild West show at St. Louis in 1904. Old Milt knew every cowboy and cowgirl performer over a span of 70 years, and old Jesse had met most of them through Milt, who once worked for The Organization in Colorado and knew many of Jesse's secrets.

After the 1937 death of his brother, Dr. Sylvester F. James in Ft. Worth, Jesse remarked, "I feel like the last of the Mohicans. I wonder how many more years the Lord has in store for me." Jesse had been living in England in 1926 when his cousin, Missouri Frank James, died under the alias of Joe Vaughn at Wayton, Arkansas, while his other cousin, Jesse Robert (Dingus) James would outlive the old colonel, dying in Florida in the middle 1950s.

In the early 1940s rumors began circulating that Jesse James had once served two years in a Texas prison. He'd protest, "This is news to me. The only time I was in prison was when I was a guest of the damnyankees at Union military prison in Mississippi as The War Between the States ended." An oldtimer went to Austin and checked the records. On October 25, 1938, Texas Governor James V. Allred signed a parole for "Jessie" James, a San Antonio Negro, who had served two years for receiving and concealing stolen property.

Jesse was startled. "My God, I've received and concealed billions of dollars in stolen property and I'm walking around free. If this Jessie James had come to me, I'd have gotten him a damn good lawyer and he wouldn't have served a day."

Oldtimers pestered (and irked) old Jesse with a frequent question, "Whatever happened to your old friend, Cole Younger? Let's see, he was your cousin, wasn't he?"

Jesse would reply, "If you go look at a tombstone in the old cemetery at St. Charles, Missouri, you'll read an inscription: REBECCA JAMES YOUNGER (Wife of Coleman Younger. Rebecca was my oldest sister, but Cole was a cousin of mine, too."

If pressed, Jesse would admit, "Well, Cole and I had a falling out over a personal matter some years back, but I understand he's older than the hills living up in Nashville." Early in 1950, Cole Younger, 127, visited old Jesse, shook his hand and tears brimmed in both old men's eyes. After a two-hour talk about old times, Cole left. He died shortly afterward.

Excitement seemed to center around Jesse James throughout his life. On the eve of December 31, 1948, the old man, then 105, was kidnaped from his Van Nuys, California, home during the height of a very rare snowstorm.

Jesse James III tells it this way. "A woman cousin, whose husband was an offbeat preacher, came to the house with a holy-roller talker and the cousin's husband demanded that all of Jesse W. James' records be turned over to them. Just like that. Then a Superior Court judge came in and I turned my back for a moment or two, but it was long enough for them to spirit away Grandpa.

"Now, I didn't notify Los Angeles Police, the Sheriffs Office or the FBI; instead, I called Grandpa's men up and down the line. The Negro maid had heard the preachers mention Sweetwater, Texas, to Grandpa. I got people like Jesse Cole James, Jim Cooper and even old

John Trammell in on the act. Their trail was easy to follow because they had a series of public appearances set up. They traveled by train and the tour was scheduled to end in Zanesville, Ohio.

"Cole found that Grandpa was suffering from double pneumonia by the time the party reached Sweetwater. The preachers didn't even want to put him in the hospital, but Cole could be pretty tough and he got his way. Tipped off, I got to Texas and threatened to scalp the two holy-rollers, who went running to the police. We didn't prefer charges and the Holy Joes really took off, but not before they stood and cussed each other out, each blaming the other. On the train trip east they'd tried to get the old man to sign papers signing his entire fortune over to them. Naturally, he refused, bellowing, 'Why, The Hawk finds you he'll scalp you first and then put bullets between your eyes.'"

Rudy Turilli died in July, 1972, and the caption under his photo in a Missouri newspaper read: "He met Jesse James in 1948 and found a wholly new life pattern created for himself." Who was Rudy Turilli? He was a promoter and proprietor of Jesse James Museum at Stanton, Missouri. After Jesse "emerged" at Lawton, Oklahoma, in 1948, Turilli had brought the old man to Missouri's Meramec Caverns, certainly no strange place to the old outlaw. It was Turilli who brought an action in Franklin County, Missouri, Circuit Court in March, 1950, in which Turilli asked that J. Frank Dalton's name of Jesse W. James be restored. The late Judge Ransom Breuer dismissed the case after a full day of testimony, ruling, "If in fact his name is Jesse Woodson James and it has not been relinquished, then it is not possible to have it restored." The trial attracted wide attention and reporters and newsreel men came from all over the world. But Turilli, an aggressive person, carried his enthusiasm too far. Jesse James III charges, "This promoter went to Granbury, Texas, shortly after Grandpa was buried and prepared to dig up his body and take it to his museum in Missouri. Fortunately, Turilli was told to get out of Texas and never return."

Old Jesse even managed to find some excitement during World War II at the age of 96. Jesse, retired Texas Rangers and old soldiers including a dozen Confederate veterans, "Saw Pearl Harbor coming". A lifelong Democrat, Jesse as early as 1935 predicted that President Roosevelt was on a collision course with Adolf Hitler. With nothing better to do, the oldtimers decided to "protect" the vital oilfields of East Texas. Although war had not been declared, the oldsters knew which "racketeers are selling hot oil to the enemy" and they compiled a long list of suspected "foreign agents".

"You'd be surprised," Jesse III said, "the number of suspected hot oil experts and suspected agents on the oldtimers' list who were picked up when Tojo hit Pearl Harbor."

The list had been submitted to Texas authorities a full year before Pearl Harbor."

The patriotic oldtimers were frustrated when one of their prime suspects, whom they called "Mr. A." had not been picked up a full two months after war had been declared. They checked old friends in Houston who reported Mr. A. had been a Japanese importer for 25 years and had made at least 10 trips to Japan. But what worried them was the man's bragging in East Texas taverns. He predicted that the Japanese Imperial Army would have both Los Angeles and San Francisco occupied by the end of 1942 and German submarines would be shelling the entire Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

Old Jesse told his group, "The guy is either nuts or he knows something that we don't. He shouldn't be talking like that because free speech ended when the Japs killed the first American boy over there in Hawaii."

A new airfield was being constructed and the old men were horrified that Mr. A. owned a small chicken farm almost where the proposed airstrips would end. In a way it was almost a comedy as old Confederate soldiers used a century-old telescope to watch Mr. A. who watched airport construction through a pair of expensive Japanese binoculars. The oldsters wrote a flood of letters to the FBI listing their "evidence". They were pleased when "government men" were seen snooping around the airfield, but most unhappy when Mr. A. continued to live on his chicken farm and to roam the countryside at will. His anti-American outbursts in the bars were carefully written down and preserved.

Then a rash of fires began to plague construction of the new airbase. Now and then a piece of heavy equipment was disabled. Mr. A. was observed making midnight forays by the aged Arthritic Corps. Jesse James III, who was waiting to be accepted by the armed forces, joined the airport security guard and old Jesse, 98 and almost 99, was given permission to move in with his grandson. The old man told his followers, "You fellows keep watching on the outside and I'll watch on the inside."

Mr. A. had made several brazen attempts to drive his pickup truck past the old security guards, saying he had business at the Engineering Office. Each time he had been turned back. But on the Easter Sunday following Pearl Harbor, Mr. A. left his truck at the gate and walked toward the Engineering Office. Old Jesse spotted Mr. A. and informed his grandson who was cooking breakfast.

Jesse III stepped outside the shack and waylaid Mr. A. "Let me see your pass," he commanded. The spy suspect drew a .38 pistol and snarled, "This is my pass, Trouble-Maker!" Old John Trammell had taught Jesse III how to use his fists. Jesse III swung a left hook, connected and Mr. A. hit the deck, dropping his pistol in the process. Then Jesse III hit the suspect twice more as he tried to rise, then grabbed Mr. A. and steered him toward the main security post which was being manned by guards in their 70s. Turning over his prisoner, Jesse III returned to the shack. His Grandfather's blue eyes were blazing with fury.

"Dammit, Lee, don't be so easy; we're at war. He drew a gun on you - you should have shot that lousy sonuvabitch!"

Within a few days word of the incident had spread in the area, but Mr. A. remained free. Old Jesse called an old friend who was the federal District Judge, but the jurist told him, "If Mr. A. is working for the Japanese Government I'm sure our federal officers will apprehend him." Old Jesse replied, "Yep, and in the meantime Mr. A. will have put the torch to this new airbase and half of East Texas. Judge, you just don't understand, dammit, we're at war!"

In the meantime, Mr. A. had learned Jesse III's name and he openly boasted "I'll kill this smart alec, Lee Howk, the next time I see him!" Old Jesse moaned, "What a hell of a way to run a war!"

About a week after Mr. A. had been kicked out of the base, Jesse III was awakened by his Grandfather's stirring about a half hour before dawn. This was not unusual - the old man required little rest so his grandson turned over and went back to sleep. Two Negro labourers, long time friends of the old outlaw, picked the white-haired old man up in front of the shack and they drove to Mr. A.'s chicken farm at the end of the projected runway.

Old Jesse went up to the small house and hammered on the door, which was opened by a sleepy Mr. A., clad only in an old pair of slacks. Rubbing his eyes, Mr. A. inquired, "What the hell do you want, you old goat?"

"We're having a barbecue for a whole bunch of relatives and I'm in desperate need of a dozen of your best broilers," old Jesse replied pleasantly.

"Goddam it, man, come back later. I'm trying to get some rest," Mr. A. said.

The old man could be persuasive. He pointed out his granddaughter was doing the barbecuing and relatives were coming from all over East Texas. Besides, his two Negro servants had war plant jobs in the city and had to get to work. The Negroes had brought along a chicken crate. Mr. A. finally struck a price with the old man and the Negroes soon had captured a dozen startled broilers.

Old Jesse then laboriously climbed a 20-foot-high mound of dirt between Mr. A.'s henhouse and the airport. Engineers were putting in a deep storm drain. Jesse noted the tile was in and the ditch was ready to be covered up.

As Mr. A. was preparing to run to his house, old Jesse called, "Hey, my God, man come up here and look at this dawn. It's just beautiful. I bet you can see for 15 or 20 miles from up here."

"I've seen it before," Mr. A. replied.

"Come on and see it again. Humour an old man a little, will you?"

So Mr. A. relented and climbed the mountain of dirt and stood beside old Jesse watching the sunrise. That was the last time Mr. A. was seen alive.

Two weeks later, a captain in the Texas Rangers came for a quiet talk with Jesse III. "We give up, Lee," he said "where did you put the body?"

"Whose body? What are you talking about?"

"The body of the man the oldtimers refer to as Mr. A. We know he threatened to kill you, but that's not the problem. You see, U.S. Government men are trying to find Mr. A. They've got the goods on him good, but damned if they can locate him."

Jesse III said, "Maybe he escaped to Japan."

"And maybe you killed him. Where's the corpus delicti, Lee? Hell, man, I don't want to punish you for doing a good deed for your country. I just want the goddam body so I can get the Government men off my neck!"

Jesse III protested his innocence. He knew nothing about the disappearance of Mr. A. and he was telling the truth. A few days later Jesse III, age 36, was sworn into the service. After being disabled by bulbar polio in October of 1943, Jesse III didn't return to Texas until February, 1944.

He looked up the Ranger captain and had a feeling the man was playing games with him. The captain suggested that Jesse III talk to two local Negroes, who lived not far from the now bustling airbase.

"Yore Grandpappy, he done shot Mr. A. deadern a doah nail!" one of them told Jesse III and the other Negro told what had occurred early that Sunday morning almost two years before. Once

atop the mound of dirt, old Jesse and Mr. A. stood peering at the sunrise.

Suddenly Jesse had exclaimed, "Reminds me of the old days, Mr. A."

"What do you mean?"

"This," said Jesse, pulling a .25 automatic. "Of course, we didn't have Japanese spies in those days, but if we had, we would have executed them!"

Jesse shot Mr. A. three times above the right eye and his body rolled down the mound of dirt and into the open drainage ditch. The Negroes were ordered to wedge Mr. A.'s body under the pipe and cover it with dirt. Returning to the airbase gate, old Jesse gave them \$20 apiece and the 12 broilers. Had they told anybody? Nobody but the Ranger captain who had kept pestering them for information.

A few days later, Jesse III located his grandfather. Rendered temporarily speechless by the polio attack, he wrote questions on a tablet about the Mr. A. incident.

The old man protested, "You know, son, either my eyes are beginning to fail or your penmanship is getting worse. I just can't make out your handwriting."

Jesse III was determined to get the story from the old man who was approaching his 100th birthday. He kept on scribbling questions. Finally, old Jesse sighed and said, "Well, that's the way stories get started. What really happened, son, is that Mr. A., once he got up on that mound of dirt, got dizzy, which I knew he would. He fainted, toppled into the ditch, broke his neck and died. It's as simple as that."

Jesse III smiled and asked, "Did you ever pay Mr. A. for those dozen broilers?"

"Hell, no, son. My name isn't Jesse James for nothing!"

In August of 1951 while on his deathbed, old Jesse said, "Lee, you know damn well I killed that sneaking Jap spy back in 1942. I was just joshing you."

While he was at it, the old man rattled off a list of what he called "minor confessions". While using the alias W. A. Clark, he pulled two robberies in Montana, one at Creston and another at Bull Hook. And he had killed three Catholic priests at what became known^{^1} Priest Butte. "They were messing around with some good Indian friends of mine and wouldn't lay off, so I shot 'em," old Jesse said. He also committed robberies at a place called "Flathead Lake" and at Kellogg-Wallace, Idaho.

And old Jesse confessed that he, not an agent, had poisoned his aunt, Zerelda Cole James Samuels, at a railroad station lunchroom in Fletcher, Oklahoma. "She was a miserable old blabberskite," Jesse said, "and was blackmailing the hell out of me. I never met a woman more vicious than Aunt Zerelda or one who deserved to be poisoned more." Jesse also admitted, "I personally poisoned old Sam Collins in 1916. He had become a drunk and was running off at the mouth. He's the same Sam Collins who stood trial for Missouri Frank James."

While Jesse W. James may have been the West's greatest gunman, he ranked high as a womanizer. The fairer sex "flocked after him ..and threw themselves at his feet" and this continued into the man's old age. One oldtimer said, "Now, that Jesse - he likes fast horses and

faster ladies!' Jesse III, who spent 40 years following his notorious grandfather's carefully concealed trails, said, "There is evidence that old Jesse married at least nine or ten times. But it's hard to pinpoint because he used so many aliases and didn't always bother to get a divorce. Being labeled a bigamist didn't particularly worry him - he was already labeled an outlaw."

Jesse III refuses to guess at the number of mistresses, casual girlfriends or the number of children sired by the old Kentucky outlaw.

Jesse W. James married Myra Belle Shirley under two names, Dick Reed and Bruce Younger, right after recovering from Civil War wounds. Myra's Confederate spy name had been "Belle Starr". Throughout his life, Jesse said Myra Belle was the only woman he ever really loved. She divorced him for "infidelity".

But when she died in 1889, Jesse asked his brother, Dr. Sylvester F. James, "Do me a favor, Frank, because you're pretty good with the pen. Write an inscription for Myra Belle's tombstone." Frank wrote:

Shed not for her the bitter tear. Nor
give the heart to vain regret. Tis but
the casket that lies here. The gem
that fills it sparkles yet.

Old Jesse said, "I know of at least three so-called poets who claimed to have written the inscription, but they lie in their teeth. Brother Frank wrote it and I paid to have it chiseled on her tombstone."

Jesse's second marriage of record occurred on May 30, 1869, when he turned Mormon and married Susan Palmer Dubuque at Malad City, Idaho, under the name of Jesse or William Cole. Susan, a former lady-in-waiting in Queen Victoria's Court, was a widow. She had married Octave Dubuque, January 5, 1861, in St. Louis and her husband died at Smithfield, Utah, in 1868. To this union was born a daughter, Mrs. Alice Susan Mason, still alive in Peru, Nebraska, in 1968. But Jesse had split before his daughter was born. In September, 1869, Cole left Malad City to "seek his fortune in the California goldfields". He never returned.

Jesse III said, "Funny thing about Grandpa. He was a very ardent and dutiful husband as long as the association was a happy one, but once a wife started to nag him, Grandpa just pulled up stakes, with or without his suitcase or saddle bags. He was the master of his destiny and his own home and he'd put up with no wife who tried to reform him."

In 1870, Jesse W. James wed Maggie (Redwing) Wabuska (sometimes called Matuska), a Sioux Indian woman. Maggie didn't seem to mind Jesse's comings and goings and their liaison lasted longer than any of his "marriages".

However, while he was married to Maggie, Jesse married a beautiful Mormon girl in Alberta, Canada, and stayed long enough to help erect a Mormon tabernacle. Then he walked out of her life. Other wives included a school teacher from Georgia and "Mrs. Smith, a widow from Oklahoma."

Jesse III said, "From the time I went to live with him in 1914 or 1915 at the age of 10, he lived with a long string of women, but I'm not sure he married all of them. Even on his deathbed he

was close-mouthed about his marriages. After he died, August 15, 1951, I began getting a lot of letters and photostatic copies of purported marriage licenses involving Grandpa. Some were mailed by the women themselves, others by kinfolk. I don't know how many of them are legitimate because I've never had time to run them down. If only half of them are real, old Jesse may have been married at least fifty times. But I don't believe he was. Women were too easy for him to get - he didn't have to marry them or promise them anything." When Jesse III persisted about the old man's marriages, old Jesse replied, "I've traveled a lot of trails, careful to cover them up, Indian-style. How many times have I been married? Tell you what - I'll let those learned historians try to figure it out!"

His grandson recalls, "Even in his 90s old Jessie was a lady's man, falling in and out of love faster than a high school boy. At 97, when he spent a short spell in a Texas hospital, he fell in love with a young nurse. When the old man learned she had been 'unfaithful' to him, he went on a rampage. Drawing his gun from beneath his pillow, he began shooting out the lights in his room. Needless to say, this shook up the doctors and nursing supervisors, but it frightened the young nurse more. She resigned on the spot, convinced her aged 'suitor' was out to shoot her."

A mysterious, yellowed, hand-written, unsigned sheet of paper was found in James Clan records. Entitled "Wives of Jesse", it discloses: "Myra Belle Shirley... Susan Dubuque. .. Maggie Wabuska... Family in Butte, Montana... Wife in Cardston, Canada... Wife in Medicine Hat, Canada... Wife in Belle Fourche, South Dakota... Family in Craig and Denver, Colorado... Wife in Durango, Colorado... Mormon wife in St. Charles, Missouri, died in Ellensburg, Washington. .. Maggie Ward of Georgia... Wife in Atoka, Oklahoma?... Wife in Cookson Hill country?.. Wife in Coal Hill, Arkansas... Indian wife, Elgin, Texas... German wife, Brentwood, Long Island, N. Y.?... Finish."

This would add up to 16 wives, but who wrote it? Did Jesse W. James write it, disguising his handwriting? And why the question marks after some of the listings? What does "finish" at the end mean? If old Jesse wrote it, did he mean he was finished marching women to the altar? Why aren't some of the wives named - or had old Jesse forgotten? This is doubtful because his mind was keen until the final moment.

Jesse III said, "Grandpa was quite a socializer. He loved to dance - square dancing, waltzing, the polka, schottische, two-step, jitter bugging, The Big Apple, etc. I once saw him do the Virginia Reel and even the Quadrille, the old Revolutionary War dance. But the broken hip in 1947 ended his dancing days.

"Old Jesse had a line a mile long with the ladies. He was never smutty or crude, but I've heard him say a hundred times, 'I don't go for too much sexual indulgence - and neither should you - being a woman of many charming traits, etc., etc.' Yes, he was a real character with the ladies."

Old Jesse, 107, suffered terribly during the hot summer of 1951. Some of his 33 old wounds had broken open and were ulcerated. His grandson suggested he take him to Colorado Springs where it was cooler.

The old man replied, "I love Texas and I never want to leave the state again. Texas has been mighty good to me and me to Texas. I haven't much time left, son. Be sure to bury me under my true name, Jesse Woodson James. See to it that there's no pomp, fuss, flowers or singing. I saw all that at my 'funeral' in 1882.

"I want just a simple service. Try to find a Methodist preacher, who isn't too touchy about what

he says for an old man who was outlawed, hunted and lied about all his life. I have had everything life could offer one man, so just let me die real easy, son."

Late on the afternoon of August 15, 1951, Jesse III was called into the old man's room. "I went to his bedside and got real close," Jesse III said, "because old Jesse's voice was weak. He whispered some final secrets in my ear. Some of his final gasps disclosed secrets which astounded me. I stayed by his bedside until he died at 6:45 p.m. Grandpa admitted having about 10 fake 'deaths', but this time the old warrior, Jesse Woodson James, had really climbed that last high mountain. A long and incredible life had officially ended."

Jesse W. James, with his twin sister, Matilda, was the youngest of 20 children raised by Colonel George James and his wife, the former Mollie Dalton. Jesse outlived all his brothers and sisters. His brother, John, was the second longest survivor, having died in Oklahoma, while his brother, Morgan, was the third longest, having died in Colorado.

Born a Methodist, old Jesse had converted to Mormonism, but died a Methodist. He was a 33rd Degree Mason, a member of the Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows and Elks. A lifelong Democrat, old Jesse believed Harry S. Truman was the "greatest of all American Presidents and history will prove me right."

A week after Jesse was buried, an oldtime Texan, whose father had served in The Knights of the Golden Circle, told his cronies, "Well, old Quantrill and Jeff Davis might have been battling up there for control of the Golden Circle. But that's all changed now. Old Jesse's now sitting in the big chair running things. God knows by now Jesse may have let old St. Peter in the Inner Sanctum, but if St. Peter ever had any damnyankee sympathies, Jesse found a way of keeping him out. If the streets of Heaven are paved with gold, that old scoundrel, Jesse James, is probably working on a scheme to rip up the streets, melt them into ingots, and stash them away in Confederate depositories. Old Jesse can be mighty persuasive. By now, he may have enlisted Gabriel as a bugler in the Confederate Underground Army!"

But Jesse's brother, Dr. Sylvester F. (Frank) James, who was as eloquent with a pen as he was skillful with a scalpel, may have gotten to the crux of the Civil War issue more than 40 years earlier. On February 20, 1910, Dr. Frank wrote a letter to his cousin, O. B. James, who on January 8, 1951, was residing at 3320 W. 38th Place in Chicago. It said in part:

"Sad. very sad, indeed, to think in time not far remote, taps will be sounded at the grave of the last one that took part on either side in The War Between the States.

"When this does occur, let the children and grandchildren of both the Blue and the Gray build a monument as high as Babel, inscribed thereon, 'Erected to the Memory of the American Soldiers, both Blue and Gray'.

"No braver men ever fought for a cause or creed, so why not put prejudice aside and forget and forgive all imaginary wrongs? It is a very well-known proposition that he who fails to forgive his fellowman destroys all hope of crossing in safety the River Jordan."



FROM GERALD FORBES COLLECTION

This 1950 photograph shows Cole Younger, left, 127, Billy the Kid, in his 90s, with Jesse James, 106.

Epilogue

This has been a most difficult book to write about a most difficult man so I turned for solace to Talleyrand who said, "I do not say it is good, I do not say it is bad, I say it is the way it is."

Hundreds of authors and writers through the decades have spent their time "documenting" the crimes and exploits of Jesse Woodson James. I had not the time nor the inclination to refute them because I had my own incredible tale to tell.

The strongest piece of documentation the James Clan has is the Coroner's Report and post mortem examination made Aug. 17, 1951, two days after the death of Jesse Woodson James, alias Col. Jesse Frank Dalton and 71 other identities. The examination was held at the Estes Funeral Home, Hood County, Texas. It follows: POST MORTEM EXAMINATION held upon the body of Jesse Woodson James, alias Jesse Frank Dalton and other identities during his lifetime, said examination being held at the Estes Funeral Home, Granbury, Tex., on Aug. 17, 1951, AD.

Examination showed:

1. Height: 5' 8%" as nearly as could be determined, lying flat on his back.
2. Eyes were blue, long hair was white, fair skinned.
3. Bullet wound through left shoulder.
4. Bullet wound on the lower left side of the belly.
5. Evidence of rope burns on his heck. Wore shirt size 17 1/2
6. Bullet wound on right side of neck.
7. Bullet wound between shoulders at base of neck.
8. Bullet wound along the hairline above both eyes.
9. Bullet wound under right eye causing eye to droop due to removal of mole.
10. Small scar along under right eyelid may have been due to removal of mole.
11. Scar of some undetermined kind on lower lip.
12. Powder burns across the chin hidden by Buffalo Bill type of goatee.
13. Two bullet wounds on right shoulder.
14. Three or four bullet wounds along left arm from wrist to elbow.
15. Three or four bullet wounds indicated above elbow on left arm.
16. Tip end sort of "chewed" off on end of left index finger.
17. Two bullet wounds in the right chest near nipple.
18. Bullet wound along right side near second lower rib.
19. Evidence of several bullet wounds up and down right arm, probably 8 or 10 wounds.
20. Both feet show evidence of having been severely burned, scars on both knees.
21. Bad wound on back between both of his hips.
22. Cataracts, both eyes.

Present at the above examination were sheriff Oran C. Baker of Hood County, Tex., Joe L. Deering, Harley Cheery and Mack L. Likers. Attested to by E. B. Price, Justice of the Peace of Granbury Tex.

When word was flashed around the world on August 15, 1951, that old Jesse Woodson James had died peacefully in Granbury, Texas, southwest of Ft. Worth, one of the greatest circuses in the history of the little town began to take shape.

Relatives, some close and some distant, started pouring into Granbury from Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kentucky, Colorado and many other states. Old Jesse, it was whispered (and perhaps correctly) was a multi-billionaire so kinfolk came for their slice. A couple of ignorant mountaineers even brought shovels - just in case they had to dig for their share!

The gladiators began battling the night before the funeral, with the town square serving as the arena. At first there were angry words, then curses split the warm night air and finally fists came into play. Noses were bloodied and eyes were blackened. One town character, calmly watching the battle from across the street called it the "greatest battle since the Alamo." Finally, DeWitt Travis III, youngest son of old Quantrill, stepped among the warring factions and used guerrilla tactics to disperse the savage throng.

But the lull was only temporary. At 7:50 a.m. on the morrow, just ten minutes before the Methodist preacher was scheduled to arrive, the donnybrook was resumed in the funeral parlor. When Jesse James III, executor of the old man's will, walked in, the venomous kinfolk launched a vituperative attack on him.

A fishwife-type from Kentucky shook her finger in Jesse Ill's face and screamed, "Now, little Jesse, we got a lawyer, we have!"

"Where is this lawyer?" Jesse III asked.

"He's in Louisville - and he a good'n!" she yelled.

The old man's executor replied, "Well, sister, you're in Texas now so you better go hire about 150 more lawyers because I'm not budging. Things will be orderly - not one of you damnable, screaming idiots deserves one thin dime."

There were more shouts and abuse. Jesse III again spoke above the angry voices. "Not one of you are here to pay your last respects to a gallant old man. You should be ashamed of yourselves!" Cries of "When you gonna read the will?" rang out.

Jesse III replied, "Oh, maybe 15 or 20 years, maybe later when most of you quarrelsome, greedy bastards are dead!"

The crowd, in an ugly mood, surged toward the executor. Jesse III felt two men move to

each side of him. One was Quantrill's son, the other his grandson. He knew both of them were armed and this knowledge gave him confidence.

Then DeWitt Travis looked into the angry faces. "You better listen to Little Jesse, folks, because he's in the saddle. Now shush up. Here comes the parson. Let's have a little respect for the dead. Quiet, everybody!"

After the funeral service, most of the relatives got quietly in their cars and drove away, but a few lingered, their voices softer now.

"Oddly enough," Jesse III said, "the ones who stayed had all tapped the old man for money during the years. One relative from Kentucky received more than \$100,000 during the depression, but here he was in Granbury with his hand out for more."

The executor, who was born in 1905, says that one of the last things his grandfather whispered to him was, "Don't... probate will... for... 20 years." This has proven costly to the estate. Jesse III alleges that a "Rocky Mountain area daily newspaper was stolen from the estate, certain properties around the country have been confiscated by various states and the State of Texas put in a new law which allows a bank account to be confiscated if nothing is added or subtracted from an account for seven years."

Old Jesse spent his last 10 years setting up trust funds and corporations which he hoped would prove foolproof. He should have known what would happen after his death. A tipoff came in 1947 when he broke his hip a second time.

Old Jesse had educated one particular grandson and all the grandson's children. The grandson had a large house and wondered if the old man wouldn't be more comfortable by moving to his home in Colorado. The grandson's wife chimed in, "We'll be glad to have him, if he can pay \$1,000 a month."

The late Cora James Anderson, old Jesse's daughter, poured coals on Jesse III's head after her father died. I have several dozen of Cora's whining, sometimes threatening letters, which she sent to The Hawk (Jesse III). Cora even signed over her Power of Attorney to a non-lawyer, who brazenly demanded 25 per cent of the entire Jesse James estate!

The Hawk, who claims he spent \$250,000 in title searches and legal fees involving the old man's complicated estate, said, "Old Jesse's gold has never brought me one thin dime or peace of mind in the past 20 years, but I have received some splitting headaches. I have a note from Old Jesse which states, in part: 'You should know that I married more than a few times and have a swarm of kids scattered from hell to breakfast and a lot of grandchildren from here to yonder. Out of all my grandchildren, Lee, you are my favorite grandson. Your own Daddy didn't have what you got - you are the real chip off the old Jesse Woodson James block."

Armed with a legal document naming him the executor of the late Jesse Woodson James (and key aliases) estate and estates, Jesse James III went to a large legal firm for help. He

was told, "Sir, this is a vast estate with many legal entanglements. Our initial fee will be \$250,000, payable in advance of course, plus a negotiated percentage of the total value of the estates."

Not having that much change in his pocket, The Hawk turned to close relatives like Roscoe James, Smith James and a dozen more. The Hawk said, "I traveled to Alaska, Canada, the Dakotas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Nebraska, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, New York, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan. Meanwhile, Roscoe James dug into records in Virginia, Washington, B.C., Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and California."

Where is old Jesse's last will and testament and what does it provide?

Jesse III answers, "Remember Grandpa said I was a chip off the old block. I have it tucked away in a damn safe place. No, I didn't bury it in one of old Jesse's Confederate depositories.

"What are the provisions of Jesse's will? The document is still sealed but the old man told me what it provided for. He was on his deathbed, so he had no reason to lie.

"His will leaves me as his sole heir, but this doesn't mean I wouldn't split it up fairly if the relatives behaved and there wasn't a repetition of what I call 'The Granbury Fiasco'.

"I am the sole individual heir, but slightly less than half of his estate, which he estimated to be 'in excess of \$1 billion,' is left to the Jesse James Self-Help Program. This is something old Jesse began working on 30 years before he died. He was a man ahead of his times.

"He had great compassion for the so-called minority races in America, particularly the Negroes, the Indians and the Mexican-Americans. He used to say, 'All these people need is a chance to better themselves. They are of hardy stock and are perfectly willing and able to help themselves if they have the tools. A carpenter, electrician or plumber is no damn good on the job is he forgot his tools back at the shop. I want to give them the tools so they can make greater contributions to the economy and take out more for themselves.'

"So part of Grandpa's will provides for setting up high caliber vocational schools close by reservations, ghettos and barrios. 'This is America,' Jesse would say, 'and Americans, including the minorities, should have a choice of vocations. They shouldn't just have to take any old job or enter just any vocation to keep bread on the table.'

"And Grandpa would continue, 'We have a hell of a lot of land in this country and some of the lowest-priced land is found at the edge of the reservations, barrios, and ghettos. I would build modern plants turning out a multitude of products which would boost our Gross National Product. These plants wouldn't be run by white men or fuzzy-brained bureaucrats from Washington. They'd be run by and for the Indians, Negroes or Mexican-Americans.'

" 'And the minorities would own them. My funds would build the plants in the first place and each minority worker would buy stock in each plant. My funds would be in the nature of a loan. As each plant was amortized, the money would go into a revolving fund to build more plants.

" 'Now what about a poor Indian or a poor Mexican who would rather farm or run a ranch? That's fine. In my life I grubstaked more than a few of these people and I never lost a dime. Made money, as a matter of fact. Many times a series of small dams would provide water for irrigation and flood control at the same time. When Washington builds a huge multi-billion dollar dam, the electricity goes to factories and the water to farms owned by the white man.

" 'I call it the Jesse James Self-Help Program. Maybe another title would be People's Capitalism. The Mexican, the Negro and the Indian contributed greatly to my financial empire. He gave me an honest day's labor and he gave me loyalty. As I said, all he needs is the chance.'

"That's the way. Grandpa felt. He always claimed when level of government handed white, black, red or brown money on a platter it was Communism. 'Most Socialistic or Communistic countries I've studied have a hard time feeding themselves. There is no incentive. The Jesse James Self-Help Program or People's Capitalism has every incentive in the world,' old Jesse would say."

By delaying the execution of the old man's last will and testament, isn't Jesse James III depriving the minorities of Jesse's People's Capitalism?

"Yes," The Hawk admitted, "it has been delayed now for more than 20 years. But some key trouble-makers in the James Clan have died and others are getting feeble. If the will was read tomorrow morning I'm sure that if there are 1,555 heirs there will be 1,555 separate lawsuits brought to break the will. Actual settlement of the will might not happen until the year 2000 and by that time the lawyers would have milked most of the money."

Is the fortune of Jesse W. James likely to become just a legend?

The Hawk is candid, "That is true. The legacy of Jesse James may become a greater legend than the man's fantastic life. We're contending with human greed and avarice here and sometimes that knows no bounds. Now, I'm not just talking about the James Clan - my relatives certainly are not all that bad. Some are outstanding citizens. I'm also talking about crooked politicians, mixed-up and addlebrained judges and money-hungry lawyers."

So even in death, Jesse James is surrounded by intrigue and controversy. When his legend fades away, only the magic of his name will linger.



PHOTO BY ROY W. ROUSH

Old Pigeon Ranch house in Glorieta Pass, N.M., was once owned by Jesse James. It was built in 1848.

284

Notes

THE SAGA OF KAISER BILL

You read it here for the first time, but James Clan records detail how Jesse James and his agents smuggled Kaiser Wilhelm out of Holland in 1922 shortly after the fallen German leader had married Princess Hermine. The two men had been friends long before World War I and Wilhelm had been Jesse's guest several times in America.

Jesse and his agents left a double as "The Woodchopper of Doom" and Wilhelm and Hermine landed in West Virginia as Mr. and Mrs. William Kumpf. Although he was in his 70s, the ex-Kaiser sired several children by Hermine, who was much younger.

Two Californians alive in 1974, Jack Longley of Banning and John McFarland of El Monte, knew Herr Kumpf and his royal background. Longley knew him at his ranches in Washington, Wyoming and Nebraska, while McFarland recalls a visit in the early 1920s.

A strange-looking buggy-landau, custom-built in Germany for \$25,000, brought Jesse James, William Kumpf, John Trammell, Lucky Johnson and Jesse James III to the McFarland ranch near Fort Robinson, Nebraska. Like John Maxi (former Emperor Maximilian), Kumpf prospered in America. Kumpf, a pot-bellied, white-haired old man with "a short left arm," owned a large home near Auburn, Washington. He made few decisions without checking with Senator Clark (Jesse James). He entered prize livestock in fairs throughout the West and called his ribbons "Blue Maxes" after the highest German aviation medal in World War I.

Princess Hermine died suddenly in 1934 and was buried in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in the Chicago area. Kaiser Bill died of double pneumonia in 1937 and was buried on the old Richardson Plantation in Alabama. It is rumored but not verified their children later reburied their royal parents in the cemetery at Elkins, West Virginia.

In February, 1973, a Kumpf grandson was convicted of bribery and sentenced to prison following a sensational trial back East.

GASSAWAY WHO?

While researching this book on Jesse James, the writers came across numerous statements from oldtimers who claimed that Senator Henry Gassaway Davis, Democrat from West Virginia, was none other than Coleman Younger, Jesse James' cousin and one of the deadliest men in the West.

WHO WAS ELKINS?

James Clan records claim that Senator Stephen B. Elkins, Republican of West Virginia, was really Missouri-born Jesse Robert (Dingus) James, Jesse Woodson James' first cousin and fellow conspirator.

FINDING THE GOLD

Los Angeles treasure hunter Roy W. Roush, consultant for Charles A. Kenworthy's Quest Exploration Corp., declares: "No Confederate depository is safe from Kenworthy and his tie-up with Stanford Research Institute which is now using gadgets which can locate treasure hundreds of feet below the surface of either soil or water." In August of 1973, Roush, John McFarland and Captain Andy Miller used a VP-200, but failed to find a Confederate treasure on Bill Mahan's Pigeon Ranch in Glorieta Pass, New Mexico.

QUANTRILL'S REAL IDENTITY

Who was William Clarke Quantrill, the guerrilla chief? James Clan records reveal he also used Charles Hart as an alias, but his real name was Elbert DeWitt Travis, a younger brother of Colonel William Barrett Travis, who died with the Texans at the Alamo in 1836 when overcome by Mexican General Santa Anna's hordes. Are you listening, John Wayne?

JESSE JAMES' ANCESTRY

In studying his genealogy, Jesse James considered his ancestors who came to America lucky indeed. He said, "They were aristocracy and had money, which helped. Christopher, William and Robert Jaimes (James) were considered trouble-makers by the King of England and he was glad to get them out of the country and to Jamestown in the New World in 1607.

"On my mother's side, the Daldons (Daltons) were Irish hell-raisers and the King was more than happy to give them the northern half of Georgia if they'd

just go away."

A POINT OF ORDER

Jefferson Davis was never elected president of the Confederate States of America (CSA). He was appointed president after the Confederacy was organized Feb. 18, 1861, and directed a message to President Abraham Lincoln which said, "All we ask is to be let alone."